True Christianity.

Volume II.

COMPLEATING

The whole Oeconomy of GOD towards MAN;

AND THE

Whole DUTY of MAN towards GOD;

With Reſpect both

To the END and the MEANS

OF

RELIGION.

WITH AN

APPENDIX;

Concerning BOOKS of Controverſial DIVINITY.

By *JOHN ARNDT*, ſometime Superintendent General of *Lunenburgh*.

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Advertiſement.

MANY *Thouſands of Souls having been converted by the Preaching and Writings of the Author, particularly by his* Four Books of True Chriſtianity, *which have been abundantly bleſſed to the Church, from the Heavenly Grace ſhed abroad through them; this was judged a Motive,* in Conſcience, *ſufficient to encourage the Publication of them in our own Tongue alſo, after they had been ſo ſucceſsful in ſeveral other Languages: That ſo they might have the ſame good Effect amongſt us, as they have had (by God's Bleſſing) in other Parts of Chriſtendom. And ſuch Numbers of all Ranks having been awaken'd by the Reading of them into an* inward *Senſe of Religion, and thence experimentally inſtructed in the Difference betwixt* Real *and* Nominal *Chriſtianity; and very great Multitudes of theſe Books having been thereupon diſperſed far and near, and both the High and Low Dutch Impreſſions continuing to be greedily bought up, there is a further Motive,* in Reaſon, *to expect that the Effect may here alſo anſwer the Deſign, as well as elſewhere; and that notwithſtanding ſome external Diſadvantages, this deſervedly applauded Treatiſe may be able to force its Way, to the Satisfaction of the* Bookſeller *and the* Reader, *now that it appears in an* Engliſh *Dreſs. And from the Experience moreover, of the good Succeſs which the* Firſt Volume *hath already had, in Working upon ſeveral Perſons after a manner more than ordinary, and in moſt ſenſibly affecting them with great and worthy Apprehenſions of the Subjects therein treated on; it*

is to be reaſonably hoped, that this Second Volume, *which leads the Soul on much farther and deeper in the Way of divine Regeneration, and in the Myſtery of Chriſt's ſpiritual Kingdom, and of the new Creation, cannot miſs of a proportionable Encouragement among as many as have at Heart the Promotion of true Chriſtian Knowledge; ſo ſoon as it ſhall come to be known and conſidered by them.*

It is poſſible that ſome nevertheleſs will be offended at ſeveral Paſſages in the Fourth Book, *which are, I confeſs, by no means reconcileable to certain Principles now generally received among our* Virtuoſi. *But whoſoever ſhall calmly and without prejudice conſider the preſent State of Philoſophy, and compare it with what it was about an hundred Years ago, when this Treatiſe was firſt publiſhed in* Germany, *will not be over-haſty in condemning thoſe Reflexions and Obſervations upon Principles* Then *and* There *commonly allowed, which he will herein meet with. It is poſſible that in leſs than an Hundred Years hence, there may be as great Alterations in the State of* Natural Philoſophy, *as there have been in the laſt Century. However, what may be in this Part either defective or amiſs, the more Curious may eaſily ſupply or correct from Mr.* Boyle, *Dr.* Grew, *and Mr.* Ray; *who have indeed admirably cultivated this Province, and made Philoſophy ſubſervient to Religion. And as for the common Readers, there is enough ſaid to their Capacities: and perhaps with more it may not be convenient for them to trouble their Heads.*

Nor is it any great Matter if ſome pert Students in Modern Divinity, do alſo think his Divinity *as old-faſhioned as his* Philoſophy. *It is ſufficient, that both as a Divine, and a Philoſopher, he is for going to the Fountain-Head: and for conſulting in all his Reſearches the Wiſdom of God, and for addreſſing them to their proper End; as the Third and Fourth Books do ſufficiently manifeſt. No matter*

whe-

whether he be charged with Popery *or* Puritaniſm: *the whole Subſtance of his Doctrine is to ſtand in the* old Paths *of the Saints, and to be exerciſed in the true* Following of Chriſt. *Whence it is, that this Work of his hath conſtantly been eſteemed, by the Beſt of Proteſtants, as a Treatiſe of the ſame Nature with that of the* Imitation of Chriſt, *commonly aſcribed to* Thomas à Kempis, *and no leſs fitted for univerſal Uſe than that.*

As for the Tranſlation, *Care hath been taken that the Senſe of the Author ſhould be expreſſed with that plainneſs and perſpicuity for which the Original is ſo commended. In the firſt two or three Chapters of this preſent Volume, there is a greater Liberty taken than in any of the reſt, in which generally the Text is pretty cloſely kept to, and ſome perhaps may think a little too cloſely with reſpect had to the Diſtance of Time and Place. Whether this be ſo or no, there will be various Opinions concerning the Method herein taken: And it is truly impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe. How far is the Stile and Character of all our* Engliſh *Books in Divinity which now come forth, from what was an hundred Years ago? And if the Works of an* Engliſh *Divine, who was a Writer in the Reign but of King* James *the Firſt, be now grown ſo out of Faſhion, as, for the Sake of the different Manner which now prevails, very few will be at the Pains to look into them; it is no great Wonder, if the Works of a* Foreign *Divine, written about the ſame Time, and in a Character as different as well can be from that which pleaſeth us at this Day, be thrown aſide with Contempt by certain ſuperficial Criticks, before they ſhall have made a thorough Examination into the Merits of the Performance. But notwithſtanding what may appear to remain herein of the Outlandiſh and Antiquated Garb, it may be prudence not to deſpiſe this Stranger, by receiving whom, we may poſſibly entertain an* Angel. *Being*

Being here confined by the Bookſeller, the Bulk of this Volume having ſwelled beyond what was at firſt deſigned; I am obliged to break off ſomewhat abruptly, and can only add the Explication of the Hieroglyphical Figures or Sculptures belonging to both the Volumes.

The Explanation of the SCULPTURES.

THIS having been much deſired, take then as followeth:

There are two general Figures, or Frontiſpieces: the one chiefly regarding the Inſtrument made uſe of by God; and the other, the Original Mover and Inſpirer.

The Frontiſpiece of the *Firſt* Volume repreſenting the Buſt of the Excellent Author, ſupported by a great Angel, with two leſſer Angels on each ſide from above, beholding him earneſtly, and graſping the Victorious Wreath encompaſſing the ſaid Buſt. Over which there is ſuppoſed an Appearance of the Heavenly Glory, with a *Crown* of ſeven Stars let down as from the Cloud of Glory. Under which Crown, to expreſs that it is only for the *Overcomers*, is written this Motto, VICI, *I have overcome*: And under that ſtill lower, VIDIMUS GLORIAM EJUS, that is, *We have ſeen his Glory*; thereby alluding to ſome of his laſt Words. There is a Book in the Author's Hand, which is to repreſent this Treatiſe of *True Chriſtianity*. And in the Book is written a Saying of the Author, lamenting the preſent State of Chriſtianity: CHRISTUS MULTOS HABET MI-

MINISTROS, PAUCOS IMITATORES, that is: *Chriſt hath many Miniſters, and but few Followers.* On the left and right Hand are the Emblems of the Broad and Narrow Ways; the one leading to Life, the other to Deſtruction.

The Frontiſpiece of the *ſecond* Volume appears repreſenting the Heavenly Maſter of the Author, inſtructing him in the Principles of *True Chriſtianity*, and ſitting as Sovereign Teacher in the Heart. This is the grand Figure which ought to terminate the Eye: And it is deſigned to ſet forth the internal and external Original of the Four Books in the Four Corners, which are all chain'd together as agreeing in ONE, and both flowing from, and centring in the ſame Divine Original. The firſt of theſe Books is the *Written Word*, or *Scripture*; in which may be read, *Omnis Scriptura Divinitus*; All Scripture is given by Inſpiration of GOD. The ſecond is placed for the *Book of Life*, wherein is inſcribed, *In Principio erat VERBUM*, In the Beginning was the WORD. The third is for the *Book of Conſcience*, wherein the *interior Kingdom* of Chriſt is principally concerned: and therein is found written, *Regnum Dei intra vos*, The Kingdom of God is WITHIN you. The fourth is the *Book of Nature*, wherein the *exterior Kingdom* of Chriſt is moſtly concerned; and here the Inſcription reſpects the Beginning of the Creation, both *Old* and *New*, by the firſt Words of *Moſes*, in his divine Coſmology: *In the Beginning God created.*

The Original Book, which is the Heart of LOVE, doth expreſs the deep Ground of true and ſolid Chriſtianity, which, without a divine Teaching, can never be attained to by any; it being neceſſary that the Wiſdom of God ſhould be ſhed abroad in the Heart, which is to be

taught it, as well as his Love: And that for the Attainment hereof, there ſhould be the Sacrifice of perfect Reſignation, of pure Love, and of naked Faith, with the Prayer of the Spirit. All which is ſymbolically ſet forth by the *Altar*, bearing the Inſcription of *Joannis Arndt Verus Chriſtianiſmus*, i. e. The True Chriſtianity of *John Arndt*; by the Pot of *Incenſe* upon that Altar, repreſenting the pure Sacrifice under the Evangelical Diſpenſation, aſcending in the Flames of divine Love, and ſupported by an abſolute Mortification to all Things without, and a total Self-ſurrender to the Will of God in the ſimplicity of Faith; by the *Smoke* of the Incenſe forming a Cloud, and by that *Cloud* bearing up the Heart, and mounting it towards God; and laſtly, by a *Dove*, the familiar Emblem of the bleſſed Spirit deſcending, and with his Wings overſhadowing this Heart of a true Chriſtian, which is taught of God, and burneth with Love towards Him, as the Flames thereof do expreſs.

On each ſide hereof are placed upon Pedeſtals two Images; whereof one is the Repreſentative of *Genuine* Chriſtianity. The former appears in the Form of a grave comely Matron, in a ſerious contemplative Poſture, ſupporting her ſelf by the *Croſs*, and bearing the *Sun* upon her Breaſt, the Emblem of divine Illumination; with a *Lamb* at her Feet, the Emblem of Innocence, and of the Humble, Meek, and Paſſive Life of a true Follower of Chriſt, called the *Lamb* of God. The Latter is in the Figure of ſuch an one as none can tell well what to make of, as having a Mask to cover, if poſſible, the Deformities and Fooleries of an affected *ſuperficial* Religion. Inſtead of having the *Sun* upon her Breaſt or *Heart*, ſhe hath the *Moon* upon her *Head*, as being under the Dominion of deprayed *Reaſon*, the Light

whereof

whereof is no better than the Light of the *Moon* in its Wane, when compared with that of the Heavenly Wiſdom, which is as the Sun at Noon-day. And inſtead of the glorious Light of Heaven ſhining on the other, as from the Power of the Holy Ghoſt deſcending, this maketh uſe of an artificial Light of her own kindling. And to expreſs the dark and benighted ſtate of Chriſtianity; this Figure of it is made to bear in its right Hand a Taper or Torch; but the Light thereof turned downwards, not upwards, as expreſſive of that humane Wiſdom in Matters of Religion, which is Senſual and Earthly, if not ſometimes Diabolical. The Dreſs, Features, and Poſture of ſuch a Figure could not be agreeable without being ridiculous, and the Combination herein of two ſuch different Extremes as *Levity* and *Superſtition* doth not a little tend to enhaunce the Ridiculouſneſs, and to expoſe the Abſurdity. And moreover, as *falſe* Chriſtianity is the Counterfeit of the *True*, and Superſtition the Ape of Religion; therefore no Creature was ſo fit as the *Ape* to figure out the Mimicking of the true Chriſtian Religion in the formal and ſuperſtitious Profeſſor.

Before the *firſt* Book is repreſented the Travelling Soul, as with one Foot upon the Globe of the Earth leaving it, and marching on to the bleſſed Region of Light and Life, by the Help of the *Croſs*, which is the Staff of her Journey. As ſhe is in a Poſture of forſaking the World, the old Serpent, which encompaſſeth it about, is for laying hold on her; but not being able to detain her, ſeeketh to wound her in the Heel. The great Dragon alſo caſteth out Floods of his poiſonous Malice againſt her, whoſe Face is turned from the Shadow of this World, and is directed towards Heaven, that he may deſtroy her if poſſible: But all in vain. The Croſs is repre-

repreſented here very large, as being the Principal and Fundamental Subject therein treated on, foraſmuch as, according to the Intent of the Device, *Totum in CRUCE conſtat*, &c. *i. e.* The whole Matter conſiſts in the CROSS, and in DYING: And upon the Croſs-Beam of it is inſcribed Μετανόια, which is commonly rendred *Repentance* in the New Teſtament, but properly denotes a *Tranſmutation of the Mind.* The hearty Contrition of ſuch a Soul, under the Diſcipline of the Croſs of Chriſt, is here expreſſed by a Bleeding and Flaming Heart, which ſhe holdeth to the Croſs. And the heavenly Light which ſhe hereupon receiveth into her, is figured out by the *Glory* upon her Breaſt reflected from the Glory in the Heavens, and from the *Fountain of Life*, which is the Mirror of that Glory, and the Medium of Conveyance. The *Lamb* of God is repreſented as continually ſupplying this Fountain with the Streams of his Blood, which mix themſelves with the Streams of Light, deſcending into it from on High for the Purification and Illumination of all ſuch Souls, in whom the Divine Image by Grace beginneth to be awakened. Wherefore there is ſeen a Man lying as it were faſt *aſleep* behind the Fountain, being one in whom the Image of God is not raiſed up, and who is a Captive of Death.

Now there are *Croſſes* ſcattered up and down upon the Ground where this Fountain appeareth to view: and out of a Death's Head there ſpringeth up a *Flower*, as an Emblem of the ſpiritual Reſurrection, or the Paſſage of the Soul from Death to Life in the Internal Proceſs deſcribed by our Author. Wherefore near the Foot of the Fountain, in a *Nich* thereof, there is written the general Title of theſe his Books: and in the Figure of a Book, which maketh part of the Underwork of this very Fountain, and is pla-

placed on that ſide of it which is right againſt the devout Traveller, there is written: *Liber Scripturæ*; to ſignifie that the Fountain of Life and Regeneration, is to be approached to by the Soul by means of the holy Scripture; and that the Word of God ought to be a Mark for us, whereby we may diſcern and know this bleſſed Fountain. This Book doth appear to be open, but *darkiſh*; thereby to expreſs, that in the Letter of the Scripture, without the Spirit to enlighten us therein, there is no ſmall Obſcurity to be met with. Therefore our Eyes ought to be lifted up to God, as the Figure here ſheweth, and our Heart fixed upon the Fountain.

The next, which is a Conſequence hereof, is an Emblem of the *Book of Life* and of the *threefold* Operation of the holy and bleſſed Trinity upon the Soul, for perfecting the heavenly Regeneration, and reſtoring the Beauty and Glory of the divine Image in the ſame. The Book of Life therefore is here repreſented as a Book having ſeven Seals: Which Book is *Open* in the Heart; and it is opened by the Blood of the Lamb, this Blood falling upon the Heart, which cauſeth the *Serpent* that had poſſeſſion thereof, to flee out of it. And this beginneth to be under the Operation, or Diſpenſation of the Father, which is the *Drawing* of the Soul as by a Chain from the Earth Heaven-ward. Man is hence imaged out in his fallen State, digging and grovelling in the Earth, betwixt a *Lion* and a *Goat*, his Companions; repreſenting the Dominion in him both of the *Iraſcible* and *Concupiſcible* Paſſions, that is, all the Paſſions and Diſeaſes of Humane Nature. The Chain which is let down to him from Heaven by an Angel, ſheweth the *Angelical* Miniſtration under the Law, with the Thunder and Lightnings thereof breaking through the Darkneſs of Nature, in order

order to rouſe up fallen Man, and bring him to Chriſt. Now the Heart being awakened hereby, afterward taketh into it the Light of Chriſt with his Blood that purifieth it, and driveth out that evil Spirit which had made it all Darkneſs. Thus is repreſented the Victory of Chriſt over the Serpent in our Nature: and the Illumination of the Soul, through the Glory which proceedeth from his Humanity.

And thus the Soul paſſeth on to Perfection, and Nature is perfected in Grace, under the laſt Diſpenſation of the Holy Spirit, which is ſet forth by the two Figures of Grace and Nature, the one in Heaven, the other upon Earth. That in Heaven poureth down *Streams* upon that on Earth, which cauſeth a Light to ſhine upon that Part where they fall, the other remaining ſtill dark. This divine Myſtery of the Heavenly Grace in Souls, for the Renovation of Nature, by the Miniſtration of the Spirit, is alſo farther demonſtrated by the Emblem of the *Olive-Tree*: And the whole Tranſaction by the gradual Opening of the Seals; whence the Heart alſo is repreſented part Dark, and part Light. The *Book of Conſcience* is comprehended here as in the *Book of Life*: and the whole is contained in the *Pentameter* under written:

Omnia nos CHRISTI Vita docere poteſt.

The Life of Chriſt is able to teach us All Things.

The laſt Sculpture contains a Figure of the Myſtery of Chriſt both in the Greater and Leſſer World. He is repreſented herein, as treading upon Darkneſs, and having the Clouds under his Feet. The *Old* and the *New* Creation are ſhadowed out on each ſide of him: And a great Book in the Heavens is opened, being ſupported by two mighty Angels, as it were flying through the ſame. And in the Book is written: *Liber Naturæ*, and *Megacoſmos*, and *Microcoſmos*, expreſſing the Book of *Nature*, as comprehending in it both the *great World* and the *little World*, as they are diſcourſed on by this Author, with the Deſign of Forming a *Ladder of Aſcenſion to God* by all the Creatures. Here Chriſt is repreſented as the Beginning and Ending of all Things, or as the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the Creation; and he is ſuppoſed to hold in his Hand the whole Frame of the Univerſe by the *Croſs*, out of which the Creating Word, and the Almighty *FIAT*, is made to go forth.

THE

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True Christianity.

The SECOND BOOK.

PART II.

THE
Book of Life

further Opened;
OR, THE
True following of CHRIST
IN THE
Path of Divine Regeneration and Illumination.

CHAP. I.
Of the Power of the Noble Virtue of HUMILITY.

PROV. xv. 33. *Before Honour is Humility.*
JUDITH ix. 11. *For thou art a God of the Afflicted,* (*or* Humble,) *an Helper of the Oppressed, and Upholder of the Weak, a Protector of the Forlorn, a Saviour of those that are without Hope.*

§. 1. WITHOUT true Humility all Religion is nothing. All Prayer without it, is in vain. Our Lord *JESUS CHRIST* is that Book, out of which

Christ our great Exemplar of Humility.

which this noble Virtue is beſt learnt; as who is indeed a moſt perfect Mirror unto us of all the Virtues and Graces. Look on his Life, and thou ſhalt find it made up of nothing but *Love* and *Humility*. Look on his Doctrine, and thou ſhalt ſee it to be *mere Wiſdom* and *Truth*; a Doctrine conſiſting not in Words, but in living Power; not in Schemes, or in Shadows, but in very Deed it ſelf, and in the *Subſtance* of the Things that we are taught of Him.

Whoſe whole Life was mere Humility both in Words and Deeds.

§. 2. And if we have therefore a Mind to ſtudy this Right Noble Virtue, which is the Root of the reſt, and to learn it aright from Him who is the grand Exemplar thereof; it behoves us certainly to learn the ſame, not in Words only, or by Words, but by the Deeds and the holy Example, which this our dear Lord hath ſet before us. Foraſmuch as He for this very End, *humbled himſelf unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs*. Behold then, O Chriſtian, how this gracious Virtue hath its Foundation, and its higheſt and moſt excellent Ground, not in any Angel, not in any Apoſtle or other high Saint, but in *CHRIST JESUS* himſelf alone. And therefore ſaith he, *Learn of ME*, (Matt. xi. 29.) which is as if he would have ſaid: "Look ye "upon me how I do abaſe my ſelf *under* All, "who yet am *above* All: Behold, as much "*higher* as my Majeſty is, ſo much *lower* is "my Humility: And ſo much dearer and "more lovely ſhould this Virtue be to you, "as I your Lord and your God have deſcribed and delineated the ſame in my whole "Life." Mark it: He ſaith, *Learn of me*. But what? Not to do mighty Things and Wonders, not to work Signs and Miracles, or ſhew any great Work of the Creation; but to be *meek* and *lowly*. And if I do not teach you this with mine own Example, ſaith the meek Lamb of God, that this is ſo *high* and ſo *noble* a Virtue, then never believe me more.

The only true Foundation of this Virtue.

§. 3.

§. 3. Now then, as He was juſt drawing to a Period of his Life upon the Earth, the *Humble JESUS* choſe to exemplify this as his concluding Work; when after his laſt Supper, He took a Towel and girded himſelf, and then *waſhed his Diſciples Feet*, that ſo He might by ſuch his Example implant this Virtue in all that ſhould be ever called by his Name, and might moſt ſenſibly imprint it on the Heart of every one to whom this Goſpel ſhould come. Wherefore He alſo ſaith: *Know ye, what I have done to you?* Do ye indeed conſider what it is that I have done? Will ye remember this that I have now done to you? Will ye reflect upon it ſeriouſly, and as ye ought? Will ye be ready to ſerve one another in like manner? And will ye humble your ſelves every one to the other, and ſubmit gladly even to the meaneſt Offices of Charity? Will ye call me Maſter, and yet be too high to imitate me? O learn of me, by what you have at this time ſeen me do. *For I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you.* Learn of me, if I then be your Lord and Maſter; *For I am meek and humble in Heart.* Whoſoever thence ſhall forget my Humility, the ſame ſhall forget a principal Part both of my Doctrine and my Example, and ſhall never find Reſt unto his Soul. Wherefore let this my Example be a Rule and a Square for your whole Lives, and let my Life evermore ſtand before your Eyes as a Repreſentation of Humility, and as an Image or Picture of that Lowlineſs wherewith I humbled my ſelf for your ſakes. For,

Why Chriſt waſhed his Diſciples Feet.

§. 4. Humility is the Baſis and Foundation of all Virtue, and of all Happineſs: And muſt hence at all Times, and in all Eſtates, be conſtantly exerciſed by us, according to the Bleſſed Example of our meek and lowly Maſter,

The Baſis of all the Virtues

If we aim either at being virtuous or happy. For as Pride is of all other Things moſt odious to God, ſo is Humility of all others the moſt acceptable to Him, as wherein the Image of *Chriſt* doth moſt illuſtriouſly ſhine, in Oppoſition to that of *Satan*, darting forth its bright Beams on the Soul. Hence every one *that exalteth himſelf*, as *Lucifer* and *Adam* did in the beginning, *ſhall be abaſed*: And *he that humbleth himſelf*, as *Chriſt* did in the fulneſs of Time, and for our ſakes, *ſhall be exalted.* For he that exalts himſelf muſt needs be humbled; becauſe *Self-exaltation* is a meer Phantaſy, and hath nothing to bottom it ſelf upon. And he that *humbles* himſelf, muſt needs be exalted; becauſe *Self-Humiliation* is full of Truth and Reality; and hath ſuch a Bottom to ſubſiſt upon, as uniteth Heaven and Earth together.

Mat. xxiii. 12. Luk. xiv. 11. ——xviii. 14.

Compared with its oppoſite Vice.

§. 5. Pride aims at the utmoſt Pitch of Honour; yet undermines what it would advance. Humility, on the contrary, leads us to the Bottom of our Condition, and gives us the true Light of our own Vileneſs; yet raiſes hereupon a moſt magnificent Structure, like to the Creation of the World out of Emptineſs and Darkneſs. Humility is ſolid and real, is juſt and reaſonable, is wiſe and holy, is beautiful and amiable, is peaceable and righteous, is good and profitable, and there is no end of counting its Excellencies. Humility exalteth us in the Eſteem of God and Man: It draweth down Grace from God; and it inviteth the Favour even of them that are Strangers to it. Humility is ſuitable to all Objects; is agreeable to all the Ends and Cauſes of Human Life; is fitted to all the Circumſtances of our preſent Eſtate and Condition. Humility is full of Grace and Truth; it is a Glaſs of all the Divine Forms; it is the Ground of all the Divine Works; it is the

The Character and Effects of it.

the Womb of all Felicity. Humility is the Footſtool of God's Throne; it is the Mirror of his Greatneſs; it is the Magnet of all his Glories and Beauties. In a Word: it is moſt agreeable to all the Principles of Nature and Grace, to all the Deſires of Angels and Men, and to all the Deſigns of God himſelf; according as ſome have very well obſerved. So that nothing is more true, than that: *before Honour is Humility.*

Why Prayer without it ineffectual.

§. 6. And now it begins to appear, why without Humility all Prayer to God is utterly inſignificant. For Humility is a bright Light in the Heart, wherein at once is diſcovered to us our own *Nothingneſs*, and the high Majeſty and overflowing Goodneſs of God. The more hence any Man knows himſelf, the more he muſt needs come to the Knowledge of his own proper *Nothing*. Becauſe when a Man ſees his own Emptineſs, and how he is *without Form*, and perfectly *void*, being naked and deſtitute in himſelf of every thing that is good, the *Darkneſs* which *was upon the Face* of his Mind begins inſtantly to break away; and he betakes himſelf earneſtly hereupon, to *pray* for the Grace and Mercy of God, to fill his Vacuity, and to make him what He would pleaſe to have him, in the Order of the *new* Creation. So he pants after, and betakes himſelf to GOD, as to the Original and Fountain of all good Things; deſiring to know Him aright, to praiſe Him, and to honour Him as he ſhould. This Deſire being thus begotten in him, he pours out his Heart by himſelf, and ſays: *When ſhall I come to appear before the Preſence of God?* And then finding an utter inability in himſelf, and beholding God as at an infinite Diſtance, his Soul is ſore vexed within him, and Tears are his Meat both Day and Night. Now when he thinks hereupon continually, and pours out himſelf after this man-

ner, acknowledging from the Ground of the Heart his own Vileneſs; then one Deep calls to another Deep, even the Deep of his Miſery, to the Deep of God's Mercy. For in this Humility he looks at God's Majeſty and Greatneſs, as alſo at his ſuperabundant Love and Grace. And hereupon do the Streams of Grace ſweetly flow down into ſuch a faithful humble Soul by Prayer. And divine Grace thus being communicated to this thirſty Soul, there is hereby conceived in her a Spirit of Prayer, which ceaſes not to aſcend up in holy Aſpirations, and to bring down the Bleſſings of Peace and Righteouſneſs. This Spirit of Prayer is of God moſt beloved: and He is able to deny nothing that it asks for. Whoſoever would attain it, and would have all his Prayers and Deſires anſwer'd by God, muſt therefore be ſure to keep cloſe to Humility.

How it diſpoſes the Soul to receive the Holy Ghoſt.

§. 7. Moreover by Humility, there is an Illapſe of the Holy Spirit into the Soul, whoſe Influences grow continually thereby ſtronger and ſtronger: and the *Love of God* is by this means *ſhed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghoſt*, which is given unto us through the Prayer of Humility. For when the faithful Soul, that is conſcious of her own Vileneſs, reflects upon the Humiliation of the Son of God, and beholds him humbling himſelf after ſuch a manner, as not only to put off the Form of *God*, that He might appear in that of *Man*, but even to ſuffer the greateſt of Evils too in this vile Form, for the very wretchedeſt and moſt ungrateful of his Creatures; by this Reflexion and Conſideration, he is not only made humble, but hence alſo, in this his Humility, there ſpringeth up a moſt noble Flame of Divine Charity, which burneth more and more Day by Day: And in this Divine Love-Flame, ſhe being attracted by Faith into God, ſhe is hence made

made to love now all Men in God, and in Chriſt; as calling to Mind the exceeding great Love of the Godhead towards Mankind; and particularly how her heavenly Father hath in Chriſt loved her, and called her to the Participation of his Goodneſs, though moſt unworthy, and without the leaſt Shadow of Merit. And when thus the Soul is drawn into God, and is ſwallowed up with his Love, the Conſequence hereof is this, that all thoſe Things or Perſons which are beloved by God, the Soul alſo cannot but love in like manner as God loveth them. Therefore,

And particularly for the Fruits of Charity.

§. 8. It hence now follows, that if any Good befal our Neighbour, Charity will rejoice; but if any Evil happen to him, it will make us ſorrowful. For doubtleſs the humble and the charitable Perſon, behaving himſelf courteouſly and lovingly towards his Neighbour on all Occaſions, doth not raſhly judge him, if he behold his Miſery; and much leſs doth he carry himſelf haughtily and ſuperciliouſly towards him, or treat him with Contempt. For ſuch a Soul as is truly Humble, can never ſo put off the Senſe of her own Miſery and Vileneſs, as to deſpiſe another; or to eſteem her ſelf better than any, as remembring the Mire out of which ſhe her ſelf hath been delivered. And if ſhe falleth at any time into the Mire again of any Sin, ſhe judgeth herſelf; but her Neighbour ſhe judgeth not. And while that ſhe ſtandeth, ſhe knoweth well enough, that ſhe doth not ſtand by her own Strength, but purely by the help of the Divine Grace. Humble Charity judgeth it ſelf in the firſt Place, examineth it ſelf before all, and maketh us condemn our Selves rather than others: and the obſervation of a Neighbour's Calamity, is the Cauſe of the

Soul's deſcending into herſelf, and deploring herſelf before God. Becauſe in another's Fall, the lowly and loving Soul reads her own Defaults, her own Sins and Tranſgreſſions, her own Calamity and Miſery. Moreover,

It confirms a Soul in the Knowledge of God.

§. 9. By Humility a Man is confirmed in the *Knowledge of God*, and is eſtabliſhed in *Hope*. For having a Conſciouſneſs of his own Ignorance, Blindneſs, and Folly, in Divine Matters, he gives Thanks to God for the Manifeſtation of his Word, and imprints the ſame more diligently and carefully on his Heart. But conſidering alſo, that as he has no Knowledge of God and Divine Things in himſelf, ſo likewiſe all his own Forces and Abilities are nothing before God. He is eſtabliſhed hence in a godly *Hope*, placing his Confidence in nothing but God only.

It renders a Perſon grateful in Converſation.

§. 10. Another Fruit of Humility is, That it renders a Man even *grateful* and acceptable in the very outward Courſe of his Life. For it avoids Contentions and Quarrels, and compoſes the whole Man to Gentleneſs and Benignity. Yea, by it a Man is conformed even to Chriſt himſelf, of whom the Prophet ſaith in his Perſon: *As for me, I am like a deaf Man, and heard not; and as one that is dumb, who doth not open his Mouth. I became even as a Man that heareth not, and in whoſe Mouth are no Reproofs*, Pſal. xxxviii. 13, 14. Such a faithful and humble Man as this, is a true Member of Chriſt, in whom Chriſt liveth.

It begets Peace and Content.

§. 11. Beſides, Humility brings the true and *inward Peace of the Mind*: So that the Man who is a Poſſeſſor of it, can by no manner of Miſeries and Calamities be ever broken or diſquieted; but may with St. *Paul* ſay: *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of God?* Rom. viii. 35. And he is mindful always of

of that ſaying: *My Grace is ſufficient for thee,* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

§. 12. True Humility begets alſo *Silence.* For whoſoever is endued therewith, foraſmuch as he is ſenſible of his own Ignorance and Fooliſhneſs, will hence take heed of ſpeaking a great deal, or of being over-forward to teach others. It ſtills and bridles a moſt unruly Member, and ſilently compoſes the whole Body: And the Art of Government thereof, cannot without it ever be learnt. *Is the Parent of Silence.*

§. 13. To conclude, in ſhort, it is impoſſible to enumerate how many ſpiritual Benefits and Fruits, or how many heavenly Treaſures of the Divine Virtues and Graces, are comprehended in and flow from this moſt noble Virtue; ſo that it may deſervedly be called, the *Spiritual Treaſury.* And therefore it is not without reaſon, that the Son of God, our Light, Life, Salvation, and Treaſure, would not have us to learn it of any beſides *HIM.* And O that this holy Wiſh of our Lord, might by all Chriſtians be fulfilled; and that they would with all Diligence, learn from the true and only Maſter of Life, this moſt excellent Virtue! *The Celeſtial Treaſury of all ſpiritual Benefits.*

§. 14. But if it be asked, what is the *Means* for acquiring this Virtue, and by what way one may arrive at ſo great a Treaſure, which abounds ſo with the Riches of celeſtial Grace? I anſwer, that there are two Ways or Means: The firſt is, *ardent and devout Prayer*; and the other is, the conſtant *Meditation of Chriſt crucified.* Let us then look earneſtly to the Paſſion and Death of Chriſt, and let us meditate herein, as in an holy *Book of Life*, till this Root of the Chriſtian Virtues, with all the reſt which accompany it, ſo grow up Day by Day in the Ground of our Heart, as in a fruitful and well cultivated Soil. *Two Means of obtaining it.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

How by Humility, all the Works of a Chriſtian muſt be perfected: And how without it, all that he can do is an Abomination, and no better than Idolatry.

LUK. xvi. 15.

That which is highly eſteemed among Men, is an Abomination before God.

All Good in Man from God's Grace.

§. 1. ALL ſuch Works as are a ſweet and acceptable Sacrifice to God, cannot proceed but from Faith; and this will not fail to beget Chriſtian Humility in the Heart. The Product of which is meekly to acknowledge, that in us of our Selves there is no good Thing; and that whatſoever Good may be found in us, it is wholly and only to be aſcribed to the Grace and Favour of God; according to that of the Apoſtle:

1 Cor. xv. 10. *Not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.*

Now whoſoever doth not this, is ſure to fall into Two great Sins: The firſt is, *Apoſtacy from God*, by his turning himſelf from God towards himſelf, that is, from the True and Supreme BEING, towards that which is in it ſelf *Nothing*. The Second is *Sacrilege*, by his taking to himſelf that Honour which is due to none but God; whoſe is, and not Man's, every thing that may be called Good. He therefore that worketh not all Things in Humility, doth ſteal from God the Glory that is due to Him. For when God ſays: *I will not give my Glory*

Glory to another, neither my Praiſe to graven Images; he ſhews that all Glory and Praiſe are due to him alone. Hence,

§. 2. If any Man applaud himſelf, either for knowing any thing, for doing any thing, or for being able to do this or that, verily that Man takes to himſelf the Honour and Glory which are due to God only, and ſo is thereby an *Idolater* of himſelf. For this Reaſon, Ambition is an abominable Idolatry: and Self-love, and Self-eſteem, are no leſs than *having another God before* him whoſe Name is JEHOVAH, or the *Eternal Being*. And for this very Reaſon alſo, doth the Devil ſeek to be honoured and worſhipped by his Devotees in the World. And truly ſuch a vain-glorious Devil, covetous of Honour and Worſhip from the World, doth every proud and arrogant Perſon, by thinking highly of himſelf, cheriſh in his Breaſt. If thou be wiſe, ſee then that thou break down and deſtroy this *Idol*, which is ſet up in the Sanctuary of thy Heart. There are a great many at this Day ridiculouſly ſcrupulous, who, out of an Abhorrence of Idols, are ſolicitouſly cautious, not to make uſe of, or even to look upon any *outward Images*, leſt they ſhould happen to be infected by them; not obſerving all the while, that huge vaſt Idol which they carry about with them in their very Hearts, and whence they are ſo dreadfully defiled, as to become an Abomination before God. For all that which is moſt highly eſteemed by Men, through Self-love and Ambition, is certainly but *Abomination before God*, or a moſt filthy Idol. Whence all the Men that flatter themſelves, complementing their own Honour, or Power, or Ability in any thing, or aſcribing ought to themſelves

The Idolatry of Self-Applauſe.

as

as their own, are Idolaters. Thus the whole World lieth in Idolatry; and every Houſe hath its domeſtick Gods, and Idols in Fleſh; and the very *Abomination of Deſolation* cometh at laſt to be ſet up in the holy Place, which by ſolemn Covenant, was in Baptiſm dedicated to God and his Spirit.

Wherein Idolatry properly conſiſts.

§. 3. The Idolatry which defileth thee, procedeth from within, even from the Heart. For to whatſoever thy Heart is carried out, in whatſoever it doth acquieſce and reſt, and unto whatſoever it doth cleave by Love and Inclination, whether it be good Fortune, or Wealth, or Honour, or Power, or long Life; that very Thing paſſeth immediately into an Idol, and hath ſeduced thee into the Crime of Idolatry. Foraſmuch as Idolatry is not any outward Pollution; but that which is internal, ſpiritual, and ſpringing up from within; God ſo conſiders it. He conſiders all things by the Heart, and that only He looks to, *trying the very Hearts and Reins*, and thence judging of all Things according to the Faith or Infidelity there found by Him. Whence Chriſt hath alſo plainly told thee, *Where thy Treaſure is, there will thy Heart be alſo*; that is, thy God, thy Reſt, thy Peace, thy Truſt will be there; and there will be thy Paradiſe, yea, there will Heaven and all Things be to thee. In what thing ſoever therefore thy Mind doth ſweetly and pleaſantly take up its repoſe, or ſit down with, that, let it be what it will, thou art to eſteem for thy God; for ſo indeed it is. Now if thy Heart cleave faſt to God only, then is He *thy God*, and bleſſed art thou: according as it is written: *Bleſſed are the People that have the LORD for their GOD.* And again, *Delight thou in the LORD, and He ſhall give thee*

Pſal. cxliv. 15.

——xxxvii. 4.

thee thy Hearts desire. But if thy Mind cleave to the World, then is the World thy God. And so of the rest.

§. 4. It appears hence, that really there are in the World no other Idols, but such as the Heart of Man *maketh to it self.* And so the Devil himself is called the *God of this World*, because the Ungodly follow him, do his Deeds, love Darkness, and take Pleasure in deviliſh Actions. And thus out of a Devil, Men make a God of him. *Wooden* Idols are easily avoided; but take heed of the Idols of *Gold.* See thou be not ensnared by these. It is no hard Matter to keep from *dead* Idols; but take heed thou worship not the living ones, and especially *thy self.* For as soon as thou challengest to thy self either Honour, or Praise, or Knowledge, or Power, or Might, thou settest up thy self in the place of God. Which most pestilent Idolatry, is properly struck at by God, when he denieth that he will give his Glory to another. For whatsoever is, or is called by the Name of Honour and Glory, all that is due to none but Him, who is the most High, and the most Holy One, and is the Sovereign and the Everlasting GOOD.

What makes the Devil to be God of this World.

§. 5. Whosoever therefore thou be that art not willing to make an Idol of thy self, nor to pollute thy Works with the foulest of Abominations before God, learn hence, not to ascribe to thy self Honour, or Glory, or Praise; as knowing that this is the true Humility, to shun all Honour, and to account ones self unworthy of all Glory; which, when thou shalt do, and thus shalt have mortified all Ambition and Self-esteem, then shalt thou be known to be Dead to the World indeed.

Self-Idolatry how to be avoided.

§ 6.

True Christian Humility how to be known.

§. 6. Now from this there ſprings up the *new* Man, in whom is found the moſt noble Life of Chriſt; which Life, he himſelf hath defined by *Meekneſs* and *Lowlineſs of Heart*, Matt. xi. 29. Whereas he is ſtill carnal, and lives after the Fleſh, according to the *old* Birth, who would not be honoured and greatly eſteemed. Becauſe it is the Nature of the *carnal Man* to endeavour to be, or to be accounted, above all others. But if any Man ſeek to be accounted nothing of, it is certain this Man hath an Heart truly *ſpiritual* and *Chriſtian*. But alas! Where now ſhall we find the *true Chriſtians*, that is, ſuch as are willing to be ſlighted, and to be reputed for NOTHING? For, as hath been ſaid before, it is the Property of true Chriſtians and Followers of Chriſt, to deny themſelves, to hate themſelves, to deſpiſe themſelves, and to renounce all what is theirs, for his ſake.

Matt. x. 38. Luk. ix. 23.

The Duty of a Chriſtian in Places of Honour.

§. 7. But now, if any one ſhould here ask of me: What then is to be done by a Chriſtian, if it pleaſe God ſo to Honour him, as to *give* him *Grace and Glory* before the World, (according to *Pſal.* lxxxiv. 11.) as in the Caſe of *Daniel*: And ſince God hath appointed a certain Diſtinction among Men, and ſeveral Orders, States, and Offices; and hath variouſly, for that End, diſtributed his Gifts among them, what is then the Duty of a Chriſtian, if he be advanced to ſome Poſt of Dignity? I Anſwer: If this be thy Lot, my Advice then is, that thou render all the Honour which is conferred upon thee, up to God again, and that thou aſcribe nothing to thy ſelf which is another's Right, or take that to be thine, which is God's only. Wherefore, as ſoon as any Honour is given thee, ſee that thou, being mindful of thy low Eſtate, do transfer it all to God, and keep nothing thereof to thy ſelf.

This,

This, if thou neglect to do, and ſhalt be induced to attribute any thing to thy ſelf, it is certain thou muſt loſe thereby the Divine Grace, while with a ſacrilegious Impiety thou invadeſt that which of right belongs to God. So then, if thou excel others in ſpiritual or natural Gifts, in Wiſdom, or Wit, or Wealth, or Dignity, be watchful not to take this Honour unto thy ſelf; yea, let it be thy Joy and Delight to offer all up to God again, from a moſt deep intimate Devotion of thy Heart. And this thou wilt not fail to do, and to give that Glory to him which is due, when thou ſhalt glory in nothing but in him only, according to that of the Prophet: *Let not the wiſe Man glory in his Wiſdom; neither let the mighty Man glory in his Might; let not the rich Man glory in his Riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the* LORD *which exerciſe Loving-kindneſs, Judgment, and Righteouſneſs in the Earth; for in theſe things I delight, ſaith the* LORD, Jer. ix. 23, 24.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

That to be ignorant of ones own Vileneſs, and not to give GOD alone all the Glory, is to fall into the very Sin of the Devil himſelf.

PSAL. xxxix. 6, 7.

Verily, every Man living is altogether Vanity: For Man walketh in a vain Shadow.

Man a Shadow. Pſal. xxxix. 7. — xc. 5.

§. 1. TO the End that Man may acknowledge his Vanity, he is here compared by the *Pſalmiſt*, to a *Shadow*; and again in another Place, to a *Dream*. Now what is a *Shadow?* Why, it is a certain dead Reſemblance or lifeleſs Figure of that Thing which it depends on; and which in it ſelf hath neither Subſtance nor Life, but is nothing: And even ſo in like manner, Man of himſelf hath neither Subſtance, nor Life, nor Strength, nor indeed any Faculty or Ability whatſoever; but ſo depends on GOD, even as a Shadow on the Body, or as Light on the Sun: Without whom he is a dead, lifeleſs Figure, yea, no better than nothing, as not having any thing in the leaſt whereof he may boaſt as of his own. For what can a Shadow call its own, which is it ſelf but nothing, and can poſſeſs nought as properly belonging to it? And what elſe is a *Dream* but Vanity? *Ecclus.* xxxiv. 2.

Pride the foulеſt Apoſtacy from God.

§. 2. Wherefore, whoſoever forgets himſelf ſo, as to depend on GOD, who alone is *All Things*, as doth a Shadow on its Body, *thinking himſelf to be SOMETHING when he is NO-*

NOTHING, he deceiveth himself, Gal. vi. 3. For he tumbles from the true Eternal and Sovereign *Being* into his own *Nothingness*, from the unchangeable *Good* into *Vanity*, and from *Truth* it self into a *Lye*. And this is not only the greatest of Sins, but of Punishments also. For Man, the more he turns from God to himself, approaches so much the nearer to extreme Misery and Calamity. And so Man by this means, even by turning himself away from God, towards his own Faculties and Powers, becomes properly his own Executioner, and punishes thereby the very Sin which he commits. Now he is then accounted to turn himself away from GOD, and to forsake the *Rock of his Salvation*, whensoever he doth arrogate to himself I know not what of Power, or Strength, or Art, or Skill, or Wisdom, or Honour, or Merit, so as to be willing to be thought *Somebody*, and to be *Something* accounted of; when in very deed, all these do in no wise belong to Man, or to any Creature, but to GOD only. For every Creature, as was now said, is but a mere Shadow, and of it self is merely Nothing; even so as the Life, Substance, Faculty, Wisdom, Powers and Strength which it seems to have, are not properly its own, but are God's only.

Deut. xxxii. 16.

All things are God's, and nothing Man's.

§. 3. Wherefore, presently, as a Man ascribes all or any of these to himself, immediately he falls into an Apostacy from God. Nor indeed was the Devil's Apostacy ought else, but *not abiding within the Bounds, Duties and Properties of a Creature*, which has all its Life, Substance, and Ability in God, and ought to hold the same thence, as the Shadow doth with respect to the Body and the Motion thereof. So that for any one to ascribe those

Self-arrogance a Defection from God.

things to himself which are God's; or to challenge to himself Honour, Glory, Wisdom, or Esteem, (forasmuch as none of these can agree to a Creature, but are all to be transferred to God alone, whose really they are) is properly Diabolical. And hence God permitted *Lucifer* to fall, not sustaining him any longer with his Grace, which was by him disowned. And the same thing must needs befal all Men, who through Pride and Ambition presume to arrogate to themselves any of those things which are God's. For those are not upheld by the Grace of God, who arrogantly turn themselves away from God, affecting to be as God. For God alone being the ALL, and moreover he being only Good, or the *One Good*, and the *All Good* essentially; it would be most unreasonable for any Creature to claim to it self ought of that which is Good. Hence our Blessed Lord saith,

Matt. xix. 17. *None Good but One, that is GOD*; meaning, that he is the essential Good, and He alone is All Good. Which Property of God alone, our Saviour was not willing to take unto himself in his State of Humiliation, forasmuch as He was commonly then held to be no more than a mere Man; that by this his most bright Example He might instruct us, how Man ought not to ascribe to himself the Things which are God's.

How it is Sacrilege.

§. 4. Since if He doth otherwise, then Man commits a Capital Crime, and aiming at Divinity, stains himself thereby with a most nefarious Sacrilege, being turned from God to himself. And as many as are in this Estate do seek Help, Counsel, and Comfort, not from God only, as they ought; but from Creatures, and sometimes even from the Devil himself.

But

But what greater Madneſs, or what worſe ſort of Blindneſs, than to expect Good from Evil, Life from Death, Bleſſedneſs from the Damned, Help from the Helpleſs, Bleſſedneſs from the Accurſed, and Light from Darkneſs! Whereas on the other hand, it is the higheſt Wiſdom to look for Good from the Source of all Good, to ſeek Life from the Fountain of Life, to expect Bleſſedneſs from the Spring of Salvation, and to go for Help to Him who can do all Things, and to whom nothing is hard. *And the greateſt Folly and Blindneſs.* Luk. i. 37.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the Noble Virtue of LOVE, and its Power, Clearneſs, and Purity.

1 JOH. iv. 8.

He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is LOVE.

§. 1. LOVE, or Charity, ſays St. *Paul*, is the greateſt of all Virtues, and without it all Gifts are unprofitable; therefore alſo he admoniſhes us, ſaying, *Let all* your *things be done with Charity.* Accordingly then we are doubtleſs to pray with Charity, as our Lord ſays: *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee, go thy way, and firſt be reconciled to thy Brother*, Matt. v. 23. And in the *Lord's-Prayer*, our forgiving our Neighbours Debts, or *Treſpaſſes*, is ſtrictly joined to God's forgiving ours, and reciprocally, *Matt.* vi. 12. *Love the Nobleſt Virtue.* 1 Cor. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. xvi. 14. *And the moſt Extenſive.*

But exposed to Mistakes.

§. 2. But Love is so singular a Virtue, as a Man may err or mistake therein as easily as in any thing else. Therefore nothing ought to be look'd upon with a more suspicious Eye, than Love. For there is nothing which can so powerfully bend, incline, force, or restrain, and so throughly penetrate the Mind, as Love. Therefore, if Love be not ruled by the true Light, or the Holy Ghost, it may precipitate the Soul into a Thousand Calamities.

Danger hence not only in the Love of Evil, *but even of* Good.

§. 3. And this I do not say with respect to the Love of Evil, for this, as a Diabolical Thing, is by all Christians to be avoided: But I speak of that Love which is betwixt God and Man, and his Neighbour. For Love not ruled by Divine Wisdom, can easily be deceived, misled, and thrust out of its due Order, so that it reaches not the true End. Many think they have the Love of God, and yet have the Love of the World, or their own Love, nay, it may be, the Love of Satan.

Some Instances hereof.

§. 4. Take this Instance hereof: Any one that loves the Lord God only for the sake of Temporal Things, that he may be preserved by Him from Temporal Misfortunes, loves himself more than God, and prefers his own Welfare before God. This is called inordinate love. For he ought to love God more than himself, nay, Love Him above all Things, and all Things, both Good and Evil Lots, he ought to love for the sake of God. But seeing that Man prefers himself to the Love of God, he surely makes himself God, by loving himself more than God; and whilst he loveth not God as God, for his sake, but for his own private Interest, he hath a false deceived Love. For he that hath such an one, loveth all Things for his own sake, for his own Profit and Honour which he reaps there-

With respect (1.) To the Love of God.

from.

from. He loves alſo Holy Men, nay, the very Word of God, for this only reaſon, that it may afford him a ſhew and Name of Holineſs, but not for the ſake of that excellent Good which lies hid therein.

§. 5. And becauſe ſuch a Love is impure, it bringeth forth impure Fruits, which are nothing elſe but Self-Intereſt, Self-Honour, Self-Luſt; all which are carnal and earthly, not heavenly ſpiritual Fruits. Thus many do love great Skill and Learning, that they may be preferred unto others and may rule over them, not from a Principle of the Love of God and their Neighbours; but from Love to themſelves, thinking hereby to gain great Honours and Preferments. *The Fruits hereof.*

§. 6. There are alſo others who love God for this Reaſon, that He may ſpare them, and not puniſh them for their Sins in dreadful Severity: nay, for this alſo, that He may, forſooth, be bountiful to them in this preſent Time; but this, alas! is a very *weak* Love. Now theſe alſo love God for their own Profit, and not for his own ſake, or, not by Reaſon of his being the moſt Excellent and Higheſt Good.

§. 7. Others love God for this End, that He may beſtow upon them many Gifts in Underſtanding and Wiſdom, whereby they might be praiſed.

Some alſo love Virtue, not for the ſake of Virtue it ſelf; but that they may get a great Name, and be look'd upon as brave, Virtuous Men, and Men famous for their Honeſty and Piety. All this is not true Love, for it tends not to the right End.

§. 8. Many times there ariſes alſo Love betwixt ſome Perſons joining and combining themſelves by a Love of their own framing, (2.) *To the Love of our Neighbour.*

which increaſes and riſes in them ſo high, that they are pleaſed with every thing done by him whom they love. For Love always followeth its beloved; ſeeing it ſticks and cleaves wholly unto Him. And thereby one is often involved and drawn aſide into Evil; or even the Lover himſelf allures his beloved to it, becauſe he knows that ſo it pleaſes him; and by this *falſe* deceived and deceitful Love, he is hindred from Prayer and all other Chriſtian Virtues.

Both the one and the other ſhould be guided by the Holy Ghoſt.

§. 9. Therefore now it is highly neceſſary that our Love be guided and ruled by conſidering and copying after the whole Life of Chriſt and his holy Sufferings; out of which nothing but all *pure* Love ſhineth forth. He hath loved God purely above all Things, and not himſelf. He hath loved Man with a pure undefiled Love, and not himſelf. He hath done and ſpoken nothing for his own ſake, but all for ours. Whatſoever He did and ſpoke was for our Benefit; not He was profited by it, but we. All his Pains and Labours, nay, his greateſt Torments and Afflictions, have not been too hard or heavy for him, that we only might be benefitted and ſaved thereby; nay, his very Croſs was Joy unto Him, that He might fulfil the Will of God his Father.

The Pure Love of God.

§. 10. This is a *pure* undefiled Love, which nothing is too difficult for, which complains of nothing, nay, which ſpares not it ſelf, but gives it ſelf for the Beloved's ſake, even unto Death. Whatſoever Croſſes and Sufferings God ſends, this Love takes all for Good. For, becauſe it ſees that it is the holy Will of God, it would rather ſuffer much more for the ſame, and is very well contented with every thing that God willeth; for it knows

that

that God orders all Things right and well.

§. 11. And seeing that Love unites it self to the Beloved, it learns also his Manners, follows Him for his Love's sake, and does what is well-pleasing unto Him: So he that loves Christ, rightly learns of him his manner of Life, and his Virtues, for he knows it is well-pleasing unto him. He conforms himself to his Image, and remains all the Days of his Life under the Yoak and Cross of Christ, like as Christ, during his whole Life, hath born the Cross of Poverty, Contempt, and Pains. And although no Man in this Frailty can attain unto perfect Love; yet every Christian is to endeavour that his Love be not false, but pure as much as possible, according to what St. *Paul* says, 1 *Tim.* i. 5: *Love out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned.* *The Mark of this pure Love.*

§. 12. This pure Love, derived from Christ and the Holy Ghost, works then further in Man every good Thing, and is not idle at all. It is joy unto it to do Good, for it can do nothing else; like as the Lord God says, *I will rejoice over them to do them good.* Why? Because God is Love it self, which can do nothing else but what it is *in its own Being.* And this is a Character of *Pure* and *True* Love. For this Love doth not say: I am not oblig'd to do this or that; but where it hath *no Law*, there it is a *Law* unto it self, only that it may do much good; for otherwise, Love would not continue to be Love. *The Manner and Source of its Operation.* Jer. xxxii. 44.

§. 13. From hence now it is plain, how God Almighty is never wearied out to do good; and why He is that *Infinite Good* which never ceaseth to be. For He is *everlasting Love*, which cannot desist from doing *The true Ground of it.*

good, or elſe He would ceaſe to be Love. Therefore, even when He puniſheth and chaſtiſeth, He makes all Good out of Evil, directing it to a good End, and to our Salvation, and all this out of pure Love.

No right Prayer without it.

§. 14. This pure Love of God, makes us to Pray rightly. For like as a Friend hath his Friend at his diſpoſal in all Things; ſo alſo ſuch a Lover of God, is a Friend of God, and obtains from Him what he prays for. Therefore, becauſe *Lazarus*'s Siſter knew the Lord *JESUS* to be not only a Friend, but alſo the deareſt Son of God, ſhe ſaid: *I know that even now whatſoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee*; and becauſe *Mary* loved *Jeſus*, ſhe was heard by the Lord, and He reſtored unto her, her Brother. Of ſuch a Love as obtaineth from God all things, ſaith holy *David*: *Delight thy ſelf alſo in the Lord, and He ſhall give thee the Deſires of thine Heart.*

Joh. xi. 22.

Pſ. xxxvii. 4.

Four Marks that are Characteriſtical of it.

§. 15. But that thou may'ſt have a characteriſtick Mark of this Love, obſerve theſe Four Properties of true Love: (1.) Love ſubmits it ſelf to the Will of the Beloved. (2.) True Love abandons all other Friendſhip which is contrary to its Beloved. (3.) One Friend diſcovers his Heart unto the other. (4.) A true Lover endeavours to be made conformable unto his Beloved, in his Manners, and in all his Life. Is the Beloved poor, the Lover will be poor with him. Is the Beloved deſpiſed, the Lover alſo bears his Contempt. Is he Sick, the Lover is ſick no leſs. Thus Love makes between them an equality, that they have the ſame Proſperities and Adverſities. For there muſt be ſuch a Communion between the Lover and the Beloved, as that each of them be made partaker of the

the other's good as well as ſad Condition. This ſo then, is not only a *Communion*, but an *Union* or uniting (not of two diſagreeable Hearts, but) of two Minds alike unto each other.

§. 16. After ſuch a manner now our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is become our Friend. For (1.) His Love hath ſubmitted it ſelf to the Will of Man, and was obedient unto the Croſs: nay, for the ſake of Man He hath ſubmitted his Will to every one, even to his Enemies. (2.) He hath neglected all other Friendſhip He could have had in the World; nay, He even forgot himſelf, and ſpared not his own Body and Life for our ſake. (3.) He hath in his Goſpel diſcovered unto us his Heart; therefore He ſays: *Henceforth I call you not Servants; but I have called you Friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* (4.) He is made *alike unto us in all things, only Sin excepted*, Phil. ii. 7. He is become *poor* as we are, and *mortal* like as we.

Theſe all exemplified in Chriſt.

Joh. xv. 15.

§. 17. If now we will be his true Lovers, we muſt alſo do all theſe Things. And ſeeing He *was made alike unto us in all things*, and in all our Miſery, why would not we ſtrive to be made *like* unto Him? If we thus love Him, we ſhall obtain from Him all Things by Prayer, according to his ſaying: *Unto him that loveth me, I will manifeſt my ſelf.* O what a friendly, amiable, and delightful Manifeſtation in the Heart, by feeling heavenly Joy, Comfort, Wiſdom and Underſtanding! Here is the * *True Univerſity*, and the only right Way to get Underſtanding and Wiſdom, which is ſo highly praiſed by King *Solomon* in the Book of *Wiſdom*, and in the *Proverbs*. Wiſdom, he ſays, he hath obtained

And to be copied after by us.

Joh. xiv. 21.

See for this a Book called, The Heavenly Univerſity.

ed only by Prayer: *I prayed, and the Spirit of Wisdom came upon me*, Wisd. vii. 7. Therefore we conclude, that without Love there can be no true Prayer.

CHAP. V.

Of some Marks whereby one may know whether the true Love of Christ be in us.

1 JOH. ii. 15.

If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.

Mark I. *Forsaking the World.*

§. 1. THE first Mark of the Love of *CHRIST* in us, is avoiding the Love of the World. For when thou considerest Christ in his holy Poverty, how He was so entirely empty of Love to temporal Things, his Love will also move thee to learn that thou art to put off the Love of the World, and to despise the same, so that thou wilt desire nothing in the World, but thy Lord Christ, and wilt not put thy Confidence in any Creature, and any earthly Assistance.

Mark II. *Accepting Reproach.*

§. 2. *Secondly*, Thou wilt willingly bear for Christ, Reproach and Contempt from the World, for the sake of his holy Reproach; nay, with St. *Paul*, thou wilt account it thy Glory, and rejoice in it. *Eph.* iii. 13. Thou wilt also not much be troubled, when the World makes no great Account of thee; for this was thy Lord's and Redeemer's Life in this

this World. This shall be thy full Satisfaction, that Christ is thy Honour, Renown, Glory, Light, Strength, Power and Victory, Wisdom and Skill. For to *follow Christ* is the highest Wisdom.

§. 3. *Thirdly*, Seeing that Christ in his holy Body and Soul hath suffered Pain and Sorrow unto his *Death*, thou also, for his Love, wilt not only with Patience, but even with Joy, suffer Sorrow, Persecution, Distress and Affliction, nay, Torment and Pain, unto *Death*. Mark III. *Resisting to Blood.*

§. 4. And *Fourthly*, like as Christ had comfort and joy in no Man, nor in any Creature, but *only* in God, according to what is said in *Psal.* xxii. 12. so thou also wilt bear it patiently, when all the World's Comfort leaves thee. For thou knowest that at last God will make thee joyful with his everlasting Comfort, of which St. *Paul* gives us an excellent Catalogue, 2 *Cor.* vi. 4, &c. *Let us approve our selves as the Ministers of God, in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Necessities, in Distresses, in Stripes, in Imprisonments, in Tumults, in Labours, in Watchings, in Fastings; by Pureness, by Knowledge, by Long-suffering, by Kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by Love unfeigned, by the Word of Truth, by the Power of God, by the Armour of Righteousness on the right Hand and on the left, by Honour and Dishonour, by evil Report and good Report: As Deceivers, and yet True; as unknown, and yet well known; as Dying, and behold we live; as Chastened, and not Killed; as Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many Rich; as having Nothing, and yet possessing all Things.* Mark IV. *Consolation in God only.*

§. 5. *Fifthly*, Thou shalt esteem the *Cross of Christ* as the highest Good, beyond all the Treasures of the World. For if it were not so, Christ would not have teached thee so, Mark V. *Embracing the Cross.*

and

and put it so before thine Eyes with his own Life and Example. Now thou may'st easily think that the Son of God would not with his Example mislead thee, but conduct thee to the highest Wisdom, and to the highest heavenly Joys, although the Way be streight and narrow. But thou seest that himself is gone this narrow Path. And because there
Mat. vii. 14. are few that follow Him, He says: *Few there be that find it.* For it is not an easie or cheap Thing to conquer himself, to deny himself, to die unto himself, and to renounce the World, and all that one hath. This is the *narrow Way, and few there be that find it.*

Mark VI. *Continual Presence of Christ.*

§. 6. The *sixth* Mark of the Love of *Christ* is, to have never out of our Thoughts the beloved *JESUS*; but to set Him always before us by Faith, and to consider the Works of his Love. As for instance,

And Meditation on (1) *his* Incarnation.

§. 7. (1.) His *Incarnation*, in which, as in a Book of Life, we see chiefly a Twofold Benefit. 1. That He thereby fills us with his Love. And 2. That He makes us sure of our Eternal Salvation and Happiness. O what unexpressible Love is this, that God was made Man, and like unto Man, that He might make Men like unto God. O the Greatness of Love!
Phil. II. 7. He took upon him the Form of a Servant, that He might make us Kings, and crown us with Royal Diadems. O the Greatness of Love, that God incomprehensible and invisible, should be made palpable and visible! Who, O who is able to fathom the deep Abyss of this Love! *O felix culpa (non tamen ex se, sed ex Dei Pietate) quæ meruisti nobis ostendere abyssum divinæ charitatis absconditam)* "O what a great unutterable Wisdom, that out "of the great Evil of Sin, thou hast brought "forth such an infinite Good, discovering there-

"by

"by the deep Abyss of thy Love! O great Comfort for me, to know that thy humane Birth, is my divine Birth, and a Fountain of Salvation against the Well of Sin.

§. 8. (2.) His holy *Doctrine*, wherein there is eternal Wisdom, Truth, Light, Life, and Salvation; and his holy *Life*, whereby He hath shewn us the Manner, and the Way, how to live truly Christian-like and godly. For the Pattern of his holy Life, is the most beautiful Light, which will not let us walk in Darkness. (2). *Doctrine and Life.*

§. 9. The (3*d*) is the Mystery of the Innocent *Death* of Christ, wherein *seven* Particulars are to be consider'd: 1. The Fulfilling of the *Justice* of God, and of the divine Sentence. 2. The *Satisfaction* for all our Sins. 3. Our *Reconciliation* with God; for we were reconciled to God by the *Death of his Son*, Rom. v. 10. 4. The Manifestation of the *superabundant Love* of God, through the Death of our Redeemer. 5. The *eternal Truth* of God, that He hath given us his Son, and thereby testified himself to be truly *our Father*. 6. *Victory* over all Enemies. 7. The Acquiring and purchase of eternal *Salvation* and *Life*. (3.) *Death and Suffering.*

§. 10. (4) His *Resurrection*, which gives us a firm Assurance of the Resurrection of our Body, and then also of that Spiritual Resurrection, wherein, through the Grace of God, and the Power of the Life of *Christ*, we having been spiritually dead, become spiritually alive in *Christ*, Rom. vi. 4. (4.) *Resurrection.*

§. 11. (5.) His *Ascension*, which is a Consummation of our eternal Redemption, Righteousness and Salvation. These Five Mysteries and Works of the Love of *Christ*, are the true *Christian School*, wherein we are to study, (5.) *Ascension.*

ſtudy, and to ſet them never depart from our Thoughts.

CHAP. VI.

Five Works of LOVE, wherein the Goodneſs of God is eſpecially illuſtrated.

PSALM lxxxvii. 2.

The Lord loveth the Gates of Zion, more than all the Dwellings of Jacob.

§. 1. THERE are chiefly Five Arguments of the Love of God. (1.) Chriſt's *Incarnation.* (2.) His *Suffering.* (3) God's *indwelling* in us. (4.) God's Love ſhining forth *out of the Creatures.* (5.) His Amiableneſs in his own *Being*, ſurpaſſing all created Things.

The Uniting Power of Love.

1. Where Love is, there is *Union*; for it is Eſſential unto Love, to *unite* it ſelf with the Beloved. Seeing now that God loved Man ſo mightily, it could not be otherwiſe but that He muſt unite himſelf again unto Man after his Fall, and become a Man out of pure Love and Mercy. Ah! *What is Man, that thou art mindful of him? And the Son of Man, that thou viſiteſt him!* Pſal. viii. 4. The Soul of Man is ſo much beloved of God, that like as *Chriſt* is God and Man, having united himſelf with humane Nature, or with our Body and Soul: So alſo God loveth our Soul ſo much, that He would delight to pour himſelf

himſelf wholly into the ſame, if it were but perfectly purified, and Man did not reſiſt him. For there is an infinite Love in God which is unutterable. This now is one of the greateſt Demonſtrations of the Love of God, that God is made Man, and hath ſhewed himſelf a true Lover of Men, having taken upon Him what is humane, that He might give us what is divine. He is become a Son of Man, that He may make us Children of God. He came down to us upon Earth, that He might lift us up into Heaven. O what a noble Change! all for this End, that we in Him might be loved of God. It is like as if God did call down from Heaven, ſaying: "O ye "Men, behold my beloved Son! Him I have "ſuffered to become Man, that He might be "a living Example and Witneſs of my inti-"mate Love to you; that He might bring "you all with himſelf unto me, and ye all "might be made my Children and Heirs!" Therefore the Lord calls himſelf always in the Goſpel, the *Son of Man*, out of an intimate Love to us. We ſeldom read that He calls himſelf the Son of God; but always the Son of Man, out of an Affectionate Humility and Love.

The Incarnation the chief Demonſtration of God's Love.

§. 2. Although now his holy Incarnation is a very great Argument of his Love to us; yet his holy *Suffering* and *Dying* for our Sins, is ſtill a greater one. *For greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends. In this was manifeſted the Love of God towards us,* (ſaith St. *John*) *that God hath ſent his Son, to be the Propitiation for our Sins.* This is the higheſt and compleateſt Love. Our dear God, according to his incomprehenſible Omnipotence, could have found out another

The Paſſion of Chriſt.

Joh. xv. 13.

1 Joh. iv. 9.

another Means for to redeem us; as the Lord *Christ* himself prayed for it in his Agony, saying: *Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee, take away this Cup from me,* Mark. xiv. 36. But then it would not have been the *highest Love* shewn unto us. That now God might bestow upon us the *highest* Love, and that we might not be able to say: God hath something which He loves so dearly, that He would not give it us; He hath given us his dearest Son, and not only given Him, but *given Him also to be the Propitiation for our Sins.* Therefore He could not have shewed us any greater Love. Therein *God commendeth his Love towards us,* Rom. v. 8. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all Things?* Rom. viii. 32. Hath He given us that which is the greatest, He will surely give us that also which is less. In the Eternal Life, when manifested, all what is God's shall be ours, *Rev.* xxi. 7. *He that overcometh, shall inherit all things.*

The Indwelling of God in the Soul.

§. 3. In the mean Time God sheweth his Love towards us, by his comfortable *Dwelling* among us, and *in us.* O what a great Comfort is this, that God hath sanctified our Heart, and dedicated it to be his Dwelling Place. Formerly, in the *Old Testament,* when the Tabernacle and Sanctuary was finished, *Moses* was to consecrate, to sanctifie, and to sprinkle it with the Blood of the Sacrifice; *for almost all things were by the Law purged with Blood,* Heb. ix. 22. And thereupon the *Glory of God came from Heaven, and filled the Tabernacle,* Exod. xl. 34. So also, after *Christ* died for our Sins, and we are now sanctified through his Blood, God comes to us, and makes his abode with us. Whom we love, with him

him we delight to be. God loveth Mankind dearly, therefore He delights to be with them, and to have his *Habitation among them.* Iſai. lvii. 15: *I the Lord dwell in the high and holy Place; with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the Heart of the Contrite ones.* And again, with whom we delight to be, him we love dearly; God delights to be with Men, therefore He loves Men dearly, according to the Words in the *Pſalm*: *In the Saints on Earth, and in the Excellent, is all my Delight.* This aſſurance now, that God loves us, and is with us, ought to comfort us in all our Calamities, in Poverty, in Sickneſs, in Perſecution, and in Contempt. *Ay*, ſay'ſt thou, *doth He love them whom He ſuffers to come under ſo many Croſſes?* I Anſwer, yes, that He may, through the Croſs, make them glorious. As *their Sufferings here abound, ſo alſo ſhall their Conſolations abound there*, 2 Cor. i. 5. The greater *Afflictions on Earth*, the greater *Joy and Glory in Heaven*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. And this is the Reaſon why God makes many People Miſerable and Sorrowful, namely, that He may dwell in their Hearts; for He delights no where more to dwell, than in a poor and *contrite Spirit*, Pſal. xxxiv. 19. Iſai. lxvi. 2. God fills us here with his Grace, that He may fill us hereafter with his Glory, as He fills and illuminates the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, Rev. xxi. 23.

Pſal. xvi. 3.

§. 4. The Love of God ſhineth alſo forth *out of the Creatures.* When St. *Paul* would wiſh to his *Epheſians*, the beſt, the higheſt, and the moſt glorious Thing, he wiſhes them that they might *know the Love of God*, and be able to comprehend with all Saints, *what is the Breadth*, and *Length*, and *Depth*, and

Creature-Benefits.

Eph. iii. 18.

Height of the ſame. He will ſay ſo much, that the Love of God is higher than Heaven, deeper than the Sea, broader than the Earth, longer than it is from *Eaſt* to *Weſt*, according to *Pſal.* ciii. 11. And in a Word, Heaven and Earth are full of the Love of God: For all that God hath created, be it viſible or inviſible, He hath created for this End, that his unexpreſſible Goodneſs and Love might therein be manifeſted. And therefore He hath given to Man both inward and outward Senſes, that thereby he ſhall perceive the Goodneſs and Love of God. For all that Man can apprehend by his Underſtanding, Thoughts, Mind and Reaſon, as well as what he apprehends with his outward Senſes, altogether bears Witneſs to the Love of God. All that Man hath, is a Teſtimony of the Love of God; nay, all Creatures, viſible and inviſible, are as it were, ſo many Meſſengers of God, denouncing unto us his Love, and He ſpeaking to us through them, as if he did ſay: "Behold Heaven and Earth, and "all Creatures! all this I have created out of Love to Man." And whenever we perceive the Pleaſantneſs of the Creatures, we perceive the Goodneſs of God, ſo that we both with inward and outward Senſes can taſt and ſee that the Lord is good, according to the Words of the xxxiv*th Pſalm ver.* 8. The Sun ſpeaks to us by his Glance, Light, and Warmth, as if he did ſay: "Look "upon me, I am the greateſt and the bright- "eſt Creature among all viſible Creatures, "He muſt be a great Lord that made me." But not only through the fair and more glorious Creatures God ſpeaketh thus to us, but alſo through the moſt deſpicable Worms, as if He did ſay: "Lo, to me thy Creator,

Eccl. iv. 5. Pſal. xix. 1, &c.

"thou

" thou art beholden, that I made thee a Man,
" and not a *Worm*. That God, who could
" have made thee a *Worm*, hath out of Mer-
" cy made thee a *Man*." Here remember him who ſaid: *I am a Worm, and no Man*, Pſal. xxii. 6. Thus God ſpeaks unto Man through *all* the Creatures, declares unto him his Love, and invites, allures, drives, leads and draws us unto himſelf. This is the *Wiſdom* of God, which in all Places uttereth *her Voice in the Streets*, which *rejoiceth in the habitable Part of the Earth, and whoſe Delights are with the Sons of Men*. Prov. i. 20. --Ch. viii. 31.

§. 5. Nay, if we conſider the Matter right, we are *incloſed in* the Love of God, like as we are all incloſed under Heaven, *Seeing that* in God *we live, and move, and have our Being*, Act. xvii. 28. For, like as a Man can retire himſelf no where, but he will always have Heaven round about him, above him, beneath him, and on every ſide. So alſo a Man can go no where, but the Love and Goodneſs of God follows after him, and calls him through all the Creatures, nay, through his own Heart and Conſcience, ſaying: " Whither wilt thou go, dear Child? Whither ſhalt
" thou flee from my Preſence? If thou aſ-
" cendeſt *up into Heaven, I am there. If thou*
" *makeſt thy Bed in Hell, behold I am there. If*
" *thou takeſt the Wings of the Morning, and*
" *dwelleſt in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea,*
" *even there ſhall my Hand lead thee, and my*
" *right Hand ſhall hold thee.* Therefore come
" unto me, and acknowledge my Love and
" Grace, by which I meet thee in all Crea-
" tures. Haſt thou ſinned, Grace abounds
" with me; haſt thou left me, my Love and
" Mercy hath not yet left nor rejected thee,
" but is continually running after thee, hath

How all the Creatures ſpeak out God's Love to us.

Pſal. cxxxix. 7, &c.

" been calling to thee, and as a wandring " Sheep, hath ſought after thee. And if thou " believeſt not thoſe vaſt Teſtimonies of all " the Creatures, believe yet the Teſtimony " of my dear Son, how I have loved the " World in Him, *Joh.* iii. 16. Thou canſt " no where elſe find reſt for thy Soul, turn " which way thou wilt; thou muſt and canſt " only reſt in my Love and Grace." O bleſſed is that Heart, which underſtandeth that Heaven and Earth are full of the Love of God, and that He hath as many Witneſſes of his Love, as He hath made Creatures. But the greateſt and higheſt Witneſs of all, is the *Son of God.*

The Love and Lovelineſs of God in Himſelf.

§. 6. We know alſo the Love of God, *from his own lovely Being.* For from the *Viſions* of the *Prophets*, and the *Revelation* of St. *John*, we can obſerve that God Almighty is ſo lovely and beautiful, as to tranſcend infinitely all Beauty and Lovelineſs of the World. He is the *Beauty* of all beautiful Things, the *Lovelineſs* of all lovely Things, the *Life* of all the Living. He is *ALL.* An ancient Father hath ſaid: " God is ſo lovely and beautiful, " that if a Man were in a fiery Furnace, " and did ſee the Beauty and Glory of Him " but for one Moment, the greateſt Torment " would be changed into the greateſt Joy; " as it happened unto St. *Stephen*, when he " ſaw the Glory of God, and ſaid: *Behold,* " *I ſee the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man* Act. vii. 56. " *ſtanding on the right Hand of God.*" God is ſo lovely and beautiful, that if a Man did ſee Him for a Thouſand Years together, it would ſeem unto him but one Hour. For in beholding the Lovelineſs and Glory of God, all Time is ſwallowed up into Eternity; ſo that the more any one ſees God, the more he is willing

willing to ſee of Him; the more one loves Him, the more He will love Him; and the more one praiſes Him, the more will he praiſe him. According to the Words of *Xyſtus*, an ancient Teacher: *Piorum animæ inſatiabiles amoris & laudis Dei.* That is, holy Souls can never be ſatiated with the Love and Praiſe of God. And this agrees with the Son of *Syrach*, ſpeaking of the Wiſdom of God: *He that eats of me, hungers continually after me; and he that drinks of me, thirſts continually after me.* Hence although the holy Angels have ſeen God from the beginning of their Creation, they have not yet ſeen Him enough: And although they have praiſed Him from the beginning, they have not yet praiſed Him enough: *Nam Deus omni laude laudabilior, omni amore amabilior.* That is to ſay, God is more praiſe-worthy, than all the Creatures Praiſe can expreſs; and more lovely, than the Love of all the Creatures can reach unto. For God is infinite in his Beauty, Lovelineſs and Glory, therefore no Creature can love Him enough. God is ſo amiable, that the more one loves Him, the more he deſires to love Him. He is ſo Praiſe-worthy, that the End of his Praiſes cannot be attained; ſo lovely to be look'd upon, that looking upon Him, makes never weary; ſo comfortable to be heard, that He never can be heard enough. That experimental Teacher *Taulerus* ſays: *If one might taſt but a little Drop of the perfect Love of God, all Joys and Pleaſures of this World would be changed unto him, into the greateſt Bitterneſs.* The Saints have endured the greateſt Torments for the Love of God, and have given up their Life and Body; and if one had a Thouſand Bodies, he ſhould hazard them all, on-

Eccl. xxiv. 29

ly that he might keep the Love of God, as
Pſal. lxiii. 3. the *Pſalmiſt* ſays: *Lord, thy loving kindneſs is better than Life; my Lips ſhall praiſe thee.* God is ſo high, ſo noble, and ſo pure a Good, that the more one knows Him, the more he loves Him. He is ſuch a tender deſireable Sweetneſs, that the more one taſts of Him, the ſweeter he becomes; and the more one loves Him. the more his Lovelineſs increaſeth. Bleſſed is that Soul which is filled with the Love of God. It will feel ſuch a Sweetneſs and Delight as cannot be found in Time among Creatures.

The Deceitfulneſs of the Love of the World.

§. 7. Behold now, all ye Children of Men, how ye are deceived by the Love of the World. What is it which any Man can get by the Love of Temporal things, but Sorrow, Trouble, loſs of Time, vain, unprofitable Words, which an Account muſt be given of; Quarrels, Wranglings, Fightings, Warrings, and a heavy Conſcience? Surely all the Children of Men ſhall one time ſorely repent they have loved ſo much the World, and the Things therein: According to the Warning given us by St. *John*,
1 Joh. ii. 15, &c. ſaying: *Little Children, love not the World, neither the things that are in the World: if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the World, the Luſt of the Fleſh, and the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World. And the World paſſeth away, and the Luſt thereof; but he that doth the Will of God abideth for ever.* Therefore every Man ought to be ſorry all the Days of his Life, for that he ever hath loved any thing more than God only. If God gives into thy Heart his Love above all Things, He hath given thee the beſt thing He hath, that is Himſelf.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

How the Lord *JESUS* makes known and manifeſts himſelf to the Soul, as the higheſt Love, and the higheſt Good.

JOHN xiv. 21.

To him that loveth me, I will manifeſt my ſelf.

§. 1. IF thou duly conſidereſt Chriſt crucified, thou ſhalt ſee nothing in Him, but all pure, perfect, and unutterable Love, and He will ſhew thee his Heart, and ſay: Behold, in this Heart there is no deceit and no lie, but the higheſt Faithfulneſs and Truth. Incline thy Head unto me, and reſt upon my Heart; open thy Mouth, and drink out of my Wounds the ſweeteſt Love, which out of the Heart of my Father ſprings up and flows through me. *Chriſt crucified, the Mirror of moſt pure Love.*

§. 2. When thou ſhalt taſt this Love, thou wilt forget and deſpiſe for it, all the World, and be deſirous of nothing elſe, but of this Love, and wilt ſay to thy Lord: O Lord, give me nothing more than the ſweetneſs of thy Love; nay, if Thou wouldeſt give me the whole World, I would will and deſire nothing elſe but Thee and thy Love. *The only Wiſh of a true Chriſtian.*

§. 3. O happy is that Soul which feels this Love! for in that Soul, Chriſt is truly known and manifeſted, to be nothing elſe but all pure Love, and to be the *Love of the Soul.* Theſe Words contain a high Senſe and Experience; for that Chriſt may be the *Love of our Soul,* *Chriſt the only Love of the believing Soul,*

He manifests by his spiritual Coming, and delightful Refreshing of the Soul; and when our Soul feels but a little Drop or Glance thereof, it is highly filled with Joys. For that infinite Love is so great, that our Heart cannot comprehend it. This the holy Martyr *Ignatius* owned, who always used to call the Lord *Jesus*, *his Love*, and said, *my Love is crucified*.

1 Cor. xvi. 14.

All Christian Works wrought out of this Love.

§. 4. In this Love of Christ, all our Works ought to be done, and then they proceed from *Christ* out of true Faith, and are well-pleasing unto God, whether we eat, or drink, or sleep, or perform the Duties of our Calling. All that cometh forth out of a *believing Love*, is made pleasant to God and Men; for it is done *and wrought in God*, Joh. iii. 21.

Which Love is the highest Good of the Soul.

Although now this Love of Christ, is the highest Good in Heaven and upon Earth, for all good Things are contained therein; yet is God so willing and ready to bestow it upon us, that He hath sent, even his dear Son, into this Misery, so to make us partakers in Him of this unexpressible Treasure, through Faith. And He is much more ready to give us this precious Good, than we are to receive it.

Rom. v. 5.

§. 5. This Love, *shed abroad in our Hearts* by the Holy Ghost, when felt in us, makes us more rejoice than all the World. And if all Creatures were present, a believing and loving Soul would part with them, and not so much as look upon them, because of the superabundant Sweetness of the Love of God. And if all Creatures did begin to speak, the Voice of the Love of God would be stronger, or louder, and more delightful than the Voice of all the Creatures. For this Love binds and unites the Mind unto Christ, and repleniſhes it with all Good, more and better than all Creatures could be able to do. This precious Good is indeed known, seen,

ſeen, and taſted in the Spirit; but with no Words can it be expreſſed. For all Words are much too ſhort to expreſs but ſo much as a Shadow thereof, becauſe no Man's Tongue can reach unto that precious lovely Good, which the Spirit of Man is ſenſible of. Therefore alſo St. *Paul* ſays: That he *heard* in Paradiſe *Words which no Man can utter,* (*Verba ἄῤῥητα,*) *words unutterable.* 2 Cor. xii. 4.

§. 6. And when this precious Good withdraws from the Soul, there is then greater Sorrow, than if all the World had been loſt. There the Soul calls and cries: "O thou delightful "lovely Love, I have but hardly taſted of thee, "and why doſt thou forſake me? My Soul "is as a Child that is *weaned of his Mother,* Pſal. lxiii. 4. "according to *Pſal.* cxxxi. 2. O *thy loving* Pſal. xlii. 2. "*kindneſs is better than Life*; let me taſt there-"of! *My Soul thirſteth for thee only,* and no-"thing elſe can ſatisfie nor make me joy-"ful." *The great Loſs of the Soul by its withdrawing.*

§. 7. This lovely Love cauſes alſo, that without the ſame, the whole Life is made bitter to a believing and loving Soul, and that it is accounted as all Death and Miſery. Nay, for the ſake of this Love Man deſires to die, and to put off the earthly Tabernacle, and to be at home, *and preſent with the Lord,* according to the Words of St. *Paul,* 2 Cor. v. 8.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

How the higheſt Good is known and taſted in the Soul.

PSAL. xxxiv. 9.

O taſt and ſee, that the Lord is good.

God the ſupreme Good to the Soul.

§. 1. GOD is an Eternal, Perfect, Infinite, Subſtantial, Communicating Good, full of Love and Joy, and therefore He will be known in a living Faith, in Spirit and in Truth. But this cannot be, except a Man do really *taſt* and feel in his Heart, his Goodneſs, Sweetneſs, Loving-kindneſs, and Comfort.

There muſt be in the Soul ſomewhat conformable to God:

§. 2. If now this was to be performed, there muſt needs have been in Man ſomething conformable unto, and capable of God, that ſo he might be made to partake of the higheſt Good.

This is the Soul of Man, into the Soul God was willing to pour forth his Goodneſs, nay, to dwell therein, and to manifeſt and make known himſelf more and more.

The Work of the Devil in Men.

§. 3. But ſeeing that Man hath loſt this excellent Good by Sin, and the Devil hath got a Habitation in, and Poſſeſſion of him; who works out in him all his own Works, his Pride, his Covetouſneſs, his Pleaſure, his Anger, his Envy, and ſo forth; Man therefore, through Faith of the Operation of God, muſt be turned again from the *World* unto *GOD*, from the *Devil* unto *Jeſus Chriſt*, and Satan with his Works muſt be driven out, and be utterly diſpoſſeſſed. For as long as Satan's Works are in Man, God works not in him, but his Works are hindred, that the Soul cannot *taſt* that *God is good*. This

Col. ii. 12.

Act. xxvi. 18.

is

is the Reaſon, why there are ſo few that know *GOD* aright, ſeeing that in the greateſt Part of Men the Works of Darkneſs and of Satan have the Predominion. The moſt part ſtick to the World, to the Creatures, and to Themſelves.

No taſting of God without adhering to Him.

§. 4. But they who will rightly know and feel the Lord, muſt be joined unto Him, and be *one Spirit* with Him. And the more this is done, the more God manifeſts himſelf in the believing loving Soul; the more the Heart is turned off from the World unto God, the more God is united to the Soul. For all Love to the World and Creature muſt be turned out, if the Love of God ſhall enter in. 1 *Joh.* ii. 15: *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* And where God finds a Soul empty of the World, he fills it with Heaven, with Himſelf, and with all his Goodneſs. The more the Heart is empty of Love to the World, the more God filleth it with his Light and Comfort. Therefore, an ancient Father ſays: *In an empty, ſtill, and quiet Soul, it can be better felt than expreſſed what God is.*

1 Cor. vi. 17.

None knows what GOD is but by being conſcious of his Goodneſs.

§. 5. If now a Man ſhall really know that God is good, even the higheſt Good, he muſt *taſt* his goodneſs in his Heart. The Scripture teſtifieth thereof outwardly, but the Heart muſt feel it inwardly, and muſt taſt the living Word. *Heb.* vi. 4: They *have taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come.* Thou canſt not underſtand better that God is kind and loving, than when thou feeleſt his Comfort: None can teach thee better that God is a Being full of Joy, than even God himſelf, when He rejoices in thee. And ſo it is alſo with all the other Things of God: If not He performs, and Himſelf works all in thee, thou ſhalt never come to a living Knowledge of Him. For, *to know God without God, is impoſſible,* ſaith St. *Auſtin.*

Auſtin. Therefore he ſhall never be able to know rightly what God is, unto whom God does not make known and *manifeſt* himſelf. But when a Heart feels the living Word of God, then it knows and underſtands, that God is all, All-good, and the true, perfect, eternal Good, and better than all that any Heart can wiſh for, or think upon. For beyond this Eternal higheſt Good, no Creature can think upon, nor wiſh for any thing better.

Whence the Contempt of the World floweth.

§. 6. When now this is known and taſted in the Soul, according to the Words of *Pſal.* lxxxiv. 12. and *Pſal.* lxiii. 4. *Lord, thy loving kindneſs is better than Life*; then the Soul begins to deſpiſe the World, with the Joys and Pleaſures thereof. For ſhe hath in God ſatisfaction, even full ſatisfaction, and in one Word ALL. For the World, with all that is in it, is made up but of *particular* Things, which are imperfect, and inconſtant; but God is the True, Perfect, Univerſal, and Eternal unchangeable Good.

The Practical Knowledge of God.

§. 7. Upon this ground *David* ſays: *Whom have I in Heaven, but thee, O Lord? And there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee.* This Pſ. lxxiii. 25. is a Soul which hath taſted the perfect Good, in which, all Love to the World and Creatures is vaniſh'd away, and which hath no Pleaſure nor Delight in the World and in earthly Things, but in God alone, the higheſt Good. And this is the true, ſenſible, and experimental Knowledge of God, nay, the true Love of God *above all things*, which is *felt* and *taſted* in the Heart.

For when God is rightly known, He is loved, praiſed, and honoured above all Things: If we now have the eternal, perfect Good, wherein there is all Good, and which alone is ALL, why ſhould we love that which is *imperfect*? For where the true, perfect Good is known, there it is alſo beloved above all imperfect

perfect Things, that is, above all Creatures of all the World.

§. 8. Thus now the living Knowledge of God, outdoes the Love of the World; and thus Man begins to despise the World, with all the Vanities thereof, saying with King *Solomon*: *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*, nay, all under the Sun, *is vexation of Spirit*. Thus the Love to the World is abolish'd in the Heart, and there remains only the Love to God, and the Eternal Good which abideth for ever.

The Vanity of the World.

Eccl. i. 2, 14.

CHAP. IX.

How the loving Soul considers God in his Benefits, as the most liberal Bountifulness.

1 JOHN iv. 9, 10.

In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live thro' him. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.

§. 1. ALL that God does with Man, be it either Benefits or Punishments, He does it all to this End, that Man, who is turned away from Him, may be turned and *converted* to Him again. But Man is foolish and brutish, like the Beast, and does not understand the Reason, for which God bestows upon him so great Benefits, *viz.* that thereby he might

All God's Works respect the Conversion of Men.

Psal. xxxii. 9.

might be invited and encouraged to love God; neither does he consider why God punishes him, namely, that he may turn and convert himself unto God.

§. 2. Let us consider first, the *bodily* and temporal Benefits, then the *spiritual* and eternal Ones.

Divine Benefits to Man by the holy Angels.

§. 3. God hath created nothing, either visible or invisible, which may not be serviceable to Man. The *invisible* Creatures, which are Ministring unto us, are the holy *Angels*, whose Wisdom, Strength, Diligence and Watchfulness over us, is declared, and praised in many Places of Scripture, so that even many Angels are to wait upon one Man; witness the History of the Patriarch *Jacob*, and of the Prophet *Elisha*, Gen. xxxi. 56, 57. 2 Kings vi. 7. Because many evil Spirits lay in wait for one Man to destroy him; therefore also many holy Watchmen are ordered by God for his defence. How there is Joy *in the Presence of them* over our Repentance and Prayers, the Lord teaches us, *Luk.* xv. 10.

This Benefit, because it is invisible, and is bestowed upon us after an invisible manner, many People make but little of; but a wise Man, that looks not only upon the visible World, but upon the invisible also, understands very well, that in the invisible Being, wherein God dwelleth, there is much greater Glory, and there are much greater Nations and Armies, and greater Principalities and Dominations, than in this visible World. And seeing then, that God makes his own Ministers and Princes to defend, and to watch over us, it is plain, that this is an exceeding great Benefit; like as it is to be accounted so, when a Prince appoints his own Ministers to conduct and defend one that is to tra-

travel through a Wilderness, or through a Country of his Enemies.

§. 4. Look upon the *Firmament*, and consider, how God hath appointed it for thy Service. Behold the wonderful Course of *Sun* and *Moon*, why do they run so unwearied Day and Night, and rest not so much as for one Moment? *Gen.* I. 16. *Psal.* xix. 7. Are they not diligent and industrious Servants of Man? For God hath no need of their Service. He wants none of their Operations, nor their Light, but Man is in want thereof. The *Sun* serves thee like as an unwearied Servant, which every Morning rises early, and carries before thee the Light, and puts in thy remembrance the eternal Light, which is Christ, and his divine Word; this shall be the Light of thy Soul, that thou mayest walk as a Child of the Light. The *Moon* and the Night do cover thee with their Shadow, as with a Bed, bring Rest unto thee, and teach thee to abide and to dwell under the *Shadow of the most High*, Psal. xci. 1. The *Moon* is like an unwearied Hand-maid, fetching in Water, and watering the Earth. Nay, there is not so much as one little Star, which shineth not, and hath not received one or other Blessing for the Benefit of Man.

By the Heavens.

Particularly by the Sun.

By the Moon.

§. 5. Behold the *Air* and the Winds, how fair and clear make they the Firmament, dispelling the Clouds, driving them together as great Water-Tuns, and pouring them forth afterwards upon the Earth. And it is very marvellous, that God bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the *Cloud is not rent under them*, Job xxvi. 8. But the Air must bear and hold them up, the Clouds being nothing else but a moist Vapour, which is afterwards resolved into *small Drops of Water*,

By the Air.

Job

Job xxxvi. 27. Thunder also, Lightnings, Hail, and the like, *Job* xxxvi. 3. must serve us for to acknowledge thereby the Power of God, to pray to Him, and to thank Him when He hath preserved us in a terrible Tempest; as *Psal.* xviii. 8, 13, 14. teacheth us.

By the Wind. §. 6. Behold the manifold Sorts of *Winds* which govern *Navigation*; so that where a Wind blows, there the Ship is driven on, and sails her Way, like a Bird flying through the Air. And thereby all Places of the World can be found out, and all the Secrets thereof discovered, that nothing may be kept hid of what God hath created for the Benefit of Man.

By the Sea. §. 7. Behold the various Kinds of *Fishes* in the *Sea*, Gen. i. 20, 21. Psal. civ. 25. They have their appointed Times and Seasons, in which they come and rise out of the Depth beneath, and present themselves in the Surface, like as a Flock of Sheep, nay, so crouded, they appear together, as the Corn in the Field, as if they would say: Now we are in Season, now it is the Time of Harvest for the Sea, reap and gather, O ye Men. And so it is with the Birds also; when their Time is come, they fly together in great Multitudes, and shew themselves unto Men.

By the Earth. §. 8. Behold the *Earth*, that great Store-House of Victuals, and Treasury of God. It brings forth Meat and Drink, Physick and Cloathing, Houses and Tents, and all the various Metals, Gold and Silver. Each Month produces its Flowers, which present themselves to our sight, as if they would say: Here we are, and bring our Gifts, and present you with them as good as we received them from our Creator. Nay, behold a Forest, which is the Habitation of wild Beasts; God hath put them under Man, and made him have Dominion over them.

§. 9.

§. 9. And if one would presume to enumerate all the *temporal Benefits* of God, he would find it impossible to number only them that are in one particular Country. For there is not the least Apple, or any other Fruit, but it is a Benefit of God; now let him tell them, if he be able; should not we then learn therefrom to know our good and bountiful God? *Psal.* lxv. 10, 11. If a great Potentate did make subject unto thee his whole Kingdom, and all his Dominions, Nobles, and strong powerful Men, nay, all his Subjects, and did command them, upon Penalty of corporal Punishment, to guard, defend, preserve, to cloath, cure, and feed thee, and to take care that thou want nothing at all, wouldest not thou love him, and account him to be a loving, bountiful Lord? A Fool were he that did not so. How then oughtest thou to love the Lord thy God, who hath kept nothing back for himself, but appointed to thy Service all what is in Heaven, and from Heaven, and all what is upon Earth, or any where. For He wants no Creatures for himself, and hath excepted nothing from thy Service, neither in all the Hosts of holy Angels, nor in any of his Creatures under the Stars. If we but will, they are ready to serve us; nay, Hell it self must serve us, by bringing upon us Fear and Terror, that we may not sin; and by punishing and tormenting our Enemies, and all the Wicked, more than Man can wish for.

A Conclusion drawn from the numberless temporal *Benefits of God to Man.*

§. 10. Let us now upon this Ladder of the Creatures, ascend unto *GOD* our Creator, and consider his *spiritual Benefits.* Hath not the Holy Trinity, and each Person in particular, bestowed upon Man great Grace and Beneficence? The Father hath given us his own

His spiritual Benefits to Man.

Son, *how ſhall he not with him alſo, freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 33. Hath not God the Son given us himſelf, and all what he is, and what he hath? *Rom.* v. 8. *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Chriſt died for us.* Is not the Holy Ghoſt within us, illuminating, purifying, teaching, comforting, beautifying, and adorning with his Gifts our Souls? *Rom.* viii. 16. *He beareth witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.*

All his Benefits are his Meſſengers to court us.

§. 11. In a word, God's Mercy pours forth it ſelf entirely upon us, and omits nothing, whereby Men could be moved to the Love of God. As many Benefits God beſtows upon us, ſo many Meſſengers He ſends for us to come and to enjoy his Love. If thou ſhouldeſt ask the Scriptures, the Angels, all the Prophets, and all the Saints of God, nay, all Creatures beſides; From whence come you? They would anſwer, we are Meſſengers of the Mercy of God, we carry Fire and Flames, that the Heart of Man, all frozen, and made as it were a Lump of Ice by a mortiferous Cold, might be warmed and kindled again in the Love of God. Yet all thoſe numbers of Fire-flaming Meſſengers of God, are not able to warm the dead, cold and frozen Heart. This therefore, is the greateſt Wonder the Devil can effect, that he makes a Humane Heart ſo cold as Ice, even ſo, that Warmth cannot be raiſed therein, by ſo many Flames of the Love of God.

An Appeal thence to the Heart of Man.

§. 13. Therefore hearken, thou humane Heart, and conſider where thy Creator hath placed thee. Namely, in the middle among ſo many fiery Benefits, where the glorious Angels ſurround thee with their flaming Love, and where there are ſo many Creatures and Meſſengers

Meſſengers of God, all proclaiming unto thee his Love. Wherein now hath God Almighty tranſgreſſed againſt thee? Whereby hath He deſerved, that thou wilt not, or canſt not Love and Praiſe Him? If it be too little what He hath done for thee, behold, He offers to do ſtill more. He will create for thee a new Heaven and a new Earth, and will build up a new glorious Heavenly City, which his Glory will lighten; nay, He will illuminate thee with his own Light and Glory, *Rev.* xxi. 10, *&c.* Pray, how could a young Woman be ſo cold, as not to love a fair young Bridegroom, whoſe Beauty and Goodneſs were praiſed to her Ears Day and Night, nay, one that had deliver'd her from Death, and did adorn her with all the faireſt Ornaments? Were not ſhe the greateſt Fool, if ſhe would not love him? Therefore know, thou humane Soul, how cold the Devil hath made thee, that thou canſt not at all be warmed in the Love of God.

How dearly God hath purchaſed our Love.

§. 14. And ſeeing that God hath implanted Love into all humane Hearts, tell me, if thy Love could be bought of thee, unto whom wouldeſt thou ſell it rather, than unto the Lord thy God? But thinkeſt thou, God hath not bought of thee thy Love dear enough, and hath not paid for it a Price ſufficient? Hath not He given thee his deareſt Son for it, and Heaven and Earth beſides? For all what thou expecteſt and hopeſt to get for thy Love from the World, is nothing at all, in compariſon to what God hath given thee, and what He further hath prepared for them that *love him*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Iſai. lxiv. 4. The World giveth thee perhaps, a Handful of Honour and Riches, accompanied with many

Troubles, and yet thou loveſt it? Why doſt thou not rather love God, the everlaſting Good?

Motives for our Love to God.

§. 15. But if thy Love will not be bought nor ſold, but rather beſtow it ſelf freely upon what thou likeſt beſt, what can Love find to be lik'd better than the ſupremeſt, eternal, and *moſt beautiful GOOD?* For every thing we love, is our Beauty and Ornament, and if thou loveſt God, thou ſhalt make him thereby thy Beauty, and thy Ornament. And ſince nothing is *Lovely* but what is *Beautiful*, nothing can ever make thee more lovely and comely, than the Love of God in thy Soul.

1. *The Divine* Beauty.

2. *The Divine* Benignity.

§. 16. And *laſtly*, It is but juſt and reaſonable, that we ſhould love Him *who hath loved us firſt*, 1 Joh. iv. 19. Take an Account of all the Benefits of God, and ſum them up, ſo ſhalt thou find that all the Creatures are full of the Love of God: This Love follows and ſurrounds thee every where, ſo that thou canſt not be rid of it, nor hide thy ſelf from it: It is too powerful, and overcometh thee, and thou muſt enjoy it almoſt even whether thou wilt or no, unleſs thou wouldeſt live no more. Now we know that all the Brutes love them of whom they are loved; wouldeſt thou be worſe than a Brute, hating thy Benefactor, in whoſe Love thou liveſt and moveſt, ſtandeſt and walkeſt, ſleepeſt and wakeſt? But like as a thing that is to be kindled, muſt be held to the Fire till it takes Flame: So alſo art thou to expoſe thy Heart to the Fire of the Love of God, till it be kindled and inflamed therein, which is done by a continual Contemplation of the Benefits of God. Like as formerly the Prieſts were to kindle the Sacrifices by the holy Fire:

How the Fire of Divine Love is kindled in our Hearts.

Fire: So muſt the Eternal high Prieſt *JESUS CHRIST*, kindle the Sacrifice of thine Heart, by the Fire of his holy Spirit. And this holy Fire of his Love, was burning towards us from Eternity; for He loved us before the Foundation of the World. But afterwards it hath glorioufly ſhewn forth it ſelf in the Lord's Incarnation and Birth, and chiefly in his holy Sufferings and Death, whereby He hath beſtowed upon us the higheſt Love; and this Fire of his flaming Love to us will not be extinguiſh'd to all Eternity. Unto this Fire keep thou with thy cold Heart, that thou mayeſt be warmed, kindled with and united to the Love of *Chriſt*.

CHAP. X.

How God manifeſts himſelf to the Soul, as the greateſt BEAUTY.

PSAL. civ. 2.

O Lord my God, thou art very Great, thou art cloathed with Honour and Majeſty; who covereſt thy ſelf with Light as with a Garment.

How the Soul muſt contemplate the Divine Beauty.

§. 1. LIKE as to a loving Soul nothing is more lovely than *CHRIST*, and no higher nor more precious Good than God himſelf: So there is alſo nothing more *Beautiful* in her Sight than God. For that Soul looks upon God as the greateſt *Beauty*, which nothing in Heaven and Earth is to be compared with, ſo that all the holy Angels cannot praiſe enough to all Eternity this Beau-

tifulneſs of God. For if all the holy Angels in their Luſtre, and all the Elect in their Glory, were put together, it would nevertheleſs appear, that all their Beauty and Serenity is from God, which is the Eternal Serenity and Beauty, and is derived from the everlaſting infinite Light and Brightneſs. For as God is all Good, and the higheſt Good, ſo He is alſo all Beauty, Ornament, and Glory.

How hereby ſhe forgets the Beauty of all Creatures.

§. 2. And when a Soul beholds in Spirit the Glory of God, it forgets all the Creatures, nay, the Beauty of all the Angels alſo, and is for nothing ſo much ſorry, as that it hath offended this great Good with its Wickedneſs, and this infinite Eternal Beauty and Brightneſs with its Impurity.

How ſhe is made partaker of this divine Beauty.

§. 3. But becauſe the Son of God, the Brightneſs of his Glory, (*Heb.* i. 3.) is become Man, He hath made Men partakers of his Divine Nature, and of his *Comelineſs*, 2 Pet. i. 4. So that all who are in *Chriſt* by Faith, are comely and glorious before God; He remembers our Defects and Filthineſs no more; although his Eyes ſee it, yet the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the Love of Chriſt do cover it.

The Platonic *Notion of* Beauty.

§. 4. The wiſe Heathen *Plato*, conſidering the Beauty of the Creatures, of the Luminaries, of the Firmament, of the Flowers in the Fields, of the Metals and Beaſts, hath by his Reaſon drawn forth ſuch a Concluſion, as that God muſt needs be an Eternal Being, beautiful over all things; becauſe the Beauty of all the Creatures muſt be comprehended or concentred in Him. But we own and ſay out of the Word of God, and the holy Evangeliſt St. *John*: *It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know, that when*

The Evangelical.

1 Joh. iii. 2.

He

He (God) *ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*; that we then, renewed perfectly after the Likeneſs of God, ſhall really be ſuch an Image as is like unto God, through which his Beauty, Brightneſs and Glory will ſhine; but out of *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, in the higheſt Brightneſs and Beautifulneſs over all. For in Him is all Fulneſs; and ſo it hath pleaſed the Father that *in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell*, Col. i. 19. And that *in him ſhould be gathered together in one all Things, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth*, Eph. i. 10. which no finite Creature can comprehend.

§. 5. Therefore Angels and Men ſhall admire the Brightneſs and Beauty of Chriſt, eſpecially the choſen Children of God, *whoſe vile Bodies ſhall be faſhioned like unto his Glorious Body*, Phil. iii. 21. And this is what *Daniel* ſays, Chap. xii. 3. *They that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever.* And ſeeing that the civth *Pſalm* ver. 2. ſays of God: *Thou covereſt thy ſelf with Light*, our Covering or Garment will alſo be nothing elſe but Light and Brightneſs.

The Beauty of Chriſt reflected upon Angels and Saints.

CHAP. XI.

How God manifeſts himſelf to the loving Soul as an infinite OMNIPOTENCE.

PSAL. lxxxix. 9.

O Lord God of Hoſts, who is like unto thee? Thy truth, moſt mighty Lord, is on every ſide.

The Almighty Love of God, excites the Soul to love univerſal.

§. 1. THE Love of God will, that a loving Soul do good unto all Men, and be profitable both unto Foes and Friends; not for the ſake of her own Profit and Honour, but only for the Love of God, which cauſeth or moveth his Omnipotence, as it were, to deſcend or to draw nigh unto us. Which alſo, out of its immenſe Treaſure, gives us all we have, to the End, that we ſhall give again out of Love, what his Love hath given us out of the Treaſure of his Omnipotence.

And to appropriate nothing to herſelf.

§. 2. Therefore, O Man, have a Care that thou appropriate nothing to thy ſelf, but reſtore all to the Omnipotence of God, who himſelf is all what thou haſt, and what thou art. No Creature can neither give nor take away from thee any thing, 'tis only the Omnipotence of God which does it. No Creature alſo can comfort thee, but the Love of God alone.

How the Soul then ſees all things comprehended in the Love of God.

§. 3. In this Love, the loving Soul ſees the Fulneſs of God's incomprehenſible Omnipotence, which comprehends Heaven and Earth, the Sea and the dry Land, but cannot be comprehended by any thing. For the whole World is to the Omnipotence of God, as a

Drop

Drop of a Bucket, and as the ſmall Duſt of the *Balance*, Iſa. xl. 15.

§. 4. And out of that Fulneſs of God's Omnipotence, all Powers of all the Angels, Men, and all the Creatures, come forth. Therein ſtands the Firmament of Heaven: From the ſame proceeds the Motion of the Sea, and the Virtues of the Earth; ſo that Heaven and Earth are full of God, full of Divine Power and Operation, full of the Spirit of the Lord, *Wiſd.* i. 7. The Power of God, which is the Might of his Love, comprehends, incloſes, and repleniſhes all things, but is comprehended by none. *Pſal.* cxxxix. 2, *&c.* *How out of it all things were at firſt produced.*

§. 5. As high now as God is over all Things, ſo deep alſo is He in all Things, and all Things in Him, according to St. *Paul*, ſaying: *Of him, and through him, and to him, are all Things*, Rom. xi. 36. And again: *Who is above all, and through all, and in you all*, Eph. iv. 6. *A Mirror of the Fulneſs of God's Love in all Creatures.*

§. 6. Seeing now that God is ſo great over all Things, nothing ſurely can be equal unto Him; and he that will be ſo, makes himſelf a God, commits the greateſt Sin, and falls into the Pit of Perdition. And ſeeing that God is all, all what is without Him muſt needs be nothing. Therefore out of God's Omnipotence, Man learns to know his own nothingneſs, and to fear God; who delights in them only that humble themſelves under his *mighty Hand*, 1 Pet. v. 6. *The true Uſe thence to be made.*

§. 7. As great and high now as God is in his Omnipotence, ſo little and low is He made by his Love. Behold our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, the living Son, and powerful Arm of God, by whom were all things created, and by whom all things *conſiſt*; Col. i. 16, 17. how deeply *The Condeſcenſion of Almighty Love.*

deeply is He deſcended down by his Love, and how lowly and humble hath He made himſelf under all Creatures?

The right Application of this.

§. 8. Therefore as we cannot fathom, much leſs in Words expreſs, the Omnipotence of God: So we can alſo not reach with our Thoughts the Humility and Lowlineſs of *Chriſt*. Nevertheleſs, as deep as He is deſcended, ſo high is He alſo aſcended up far above all *Heavens*, Eph. iv. 10. And unto Him be Honour and Praiſe to all Eternity. *Amen.*

The Aſpiration of a Loving Soul to OMNIPOTENT LOVE.

O God! O Jeſu! O Bleſſed Spirit!
Thou unchangeable Mind!
Thou unextinguiſhable Light!
Thou Peace never to be diſturbed!
Thou indiviſible Unity!
Thou infallible Truth!
Thou ineffable Bounty!
Thou immeaſurable Might!
Thou infinite Wiſdom!
Thou incomprehenſible Goodneſs!
Thou Omnipreſent Eternity!
Thou All-filling Simplicity!
Thou All-governing Beginning!
Thou All-moving Stability!
Thou Life of all the Living!
Thou Intellect of all intellectual Beings!
Thou Operation of all operating Things!
Do Thou enlighten me, do Thou ſanctifie me, and do Thou enliven me.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

How the loving Soul knows God as the higheſt *Righteouſneſs* and *Happineſs.*

PSAL. xxxvi. 6.

Thy Righteouſneſs is like the great Mountains; thy Judgments are a great Deep.

§. 1. ALL thoſe Souls that love God, acknowledge Him as the higheſt and moſt holy Righteouſneſs, which goes through all, and over all. This is in God, his moſt holy Will; in Angels, holy Obedience; in Man, the Teſtimony of his Conſcience; in all Creatures, it is the Order of Nature, whereby God hath ordered all Things in Number, Weight, and Meaſure. *Wiſd.* xi. 22. All what is done againſt it, is contrary to God and Nature. *The Righteouſneſs of God diſcoverable in all things.*

§. 2. All Sins therefore in the World, are committed againſt God's Righteouſneſs, and the Sinner offends thereby all Creatures, even all the Angels in Heaven, and his own Conſcience, and ſets them in a contrariety againſt himſelf. For when God is offended and provoked to Anger, all Creatures alſo are offended and made angry: Likewiſe when God is reconciled, all Creatures are reconciled alſo, and rejoice over ſuch a Man. Out of this Ground, St. *Paul* ſays, that all Things are reconciled by Chriſt, whether they *be things in Earth, or things in Heaven.* And this by Reaſon that God is reconciled through Him. *All Sin a Tranſgreſſion againſt it.* *All the Creatures Offended or Reconciled when God is ſo.* Col. i. 20.

And

And therefore ſays the Lord, *Luk.* xv. 10. *There is Joy in the Preſence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.* The Angels re-rejoice over God, for the ſake of Man.

All Creatures hence made to execute the Divine Vengeance.

§. 3. But if God be not reconciled to Man, all Creatures, Angels, and the whole Nature, do execute Vengeance upon ſuch a one. From hence come ſuch dreadful Judgments of God, that even all the Elements are raiſed up againſt ſuch a one. And impoſſible it is to keep off ſuch Vengeance and Judgments. *Thou art to be feared, O God, and who may ſtand in thy ſight when once thou art angry? Thou didſt cauſe Judgment to be heard from Heaven, the Earth feared and was ſtill,* Pſal. lxxv. 7, 8. Thus we ſee in the Plagues of *Egypt*, how all Creatures executed Vengeance upon the Wicked, largely deſcribed in the Book of *Wiſdom*, Chap. v. 18, *&c.*

The Original of the Curſe.

§. 4. From the moſt holy Righteouſneſs of God, when offended, proceeds alſo the Curſe, as *Moſes* the Man of God witneſſeth, when he ſpeaks of the Tranſgreſſion of his Law. *Deut.* xxvii. 15, *&c.*

What is meant by the Curſe *or* Anathema.

§. 5. A Curſe is, when the Juſtice of God executes ſuch a Vengeance, that the Curſed cannot enjoy any Good, neither from God nor the Creature, but is made an *abhorring unto all Fleſh*, Iſa. lxvi. 24. Maledictio *eſt ad æternam miſeriam obligatio & condemnatio.* The *Curſe* is a Liableneſs and Condemnation unto eternal Miſery. Therefore a Curſe is terrible and dreadful unto all Creatures, ſo as they cannot abide it. And this is the higheſt Vengeance of the Juſtice of God.

§. 6. From this moſt holy Righteouſneſs of *God* do proceed alſo *thoſe* wonderful, unſearchable, ſecret, dreadful Judgments; whereof *David* ſays: *Pſal.* xxxvi. 7. *Thy Judgments are a great Deep.*

And

And St. *Paul*, *How unſearchable are his Judg-* Rom. xi. 33.
ments, and his Ways paſt finding out ?

§. 7. When we now conſider them, we ſee therein the Righteouſneſs of God, whereof the Man of God *Moſes* ſays: *To me belongeth Ven-* Deut. xxxii.
geance and Recompence, ſaith the Lord. If I whet 35, &c.
my glittering Sword, and mine Hand take hold on Judgment, I will render Vengeance to mine Enemies, and will reward them that hate me. Rejoice, O ye Nations with his People, for he will avenge the Blood of his Servants, and will render Vengeance to his Adverſaries, and will be merciful unto his Land, and to his People.

§. 8. In theſe Words, *Moſes* denounces the Vengeance of God upon all the Wicked, who reſiſt the Righteouſneſs of God. Againſt them God will whet his glittering Sword, which is nothing elſe but his dreadful Sentence and Judgment, at which the *Earth feareth and is ſtill*, Pſal. lxxvi. And ſuch a one, whom God executes his Vengeance and Judgment upon, all the World cannot ſave; according to the Words of the *Pſalm: O Lord God, to whom Vengeance belong-* Pſal. xciv.
eth, O God, to whom Vengeance belongeth, ſhew thy 1, 2.
ſelf. Lift up thy ſelf thou Judge of the Earth, render a Reward to the Proud. Here we hear, although the Lord God is a gracious, loving, kind, friendly, merciful, long-ſuffering God to all them that fear Him, that nevertheleſs He is a righteous Judge according to his Juſtice, of all the Wicked that tranſgreſs againſt his Righteouſneſs.

§. 9. Therefore He ſets before us in his Word, not only Inſtances of his Grace and Mercy, but alſo of his Juſtice and Vengeance; ſuch as theſe are: The Deluge, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Pharaoh* in *Egypt*, and in the red Sea, *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, *Saul*, *Ahitophel*, *Ahab*, *Jezabel*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belthaſar*, *Sennacherib*,

Anti-

Antiochus; and in the New Teſtament, *Herod*, *Nero*, *Valens*, *Julian*, *Diocleſian*, and many more; in every one of whom, we may ſee the wonderful Judgment and Vengeance of God. Therefore He is called, *Deus ultionûm*, a God of Vengeance, *unto whom vengeance belongeth*, becauſe He is the moſt Holy, and the moſt righteous God; nay, Righteouſneſs it ſelf. Therefore the Saints (*Rev.* vi. 10.) cry to the Juſtice of God with a loud Voice, ſaying: *How long, O Lord, Holy and True, doſt thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth.*

§. 10. Such Judgments of God are done daily, but are rightly underſtood only by faithful and holy Souls, according to the Words of the *Pſalm*: *With thine Eyes ſhalt thou behold and* Pſal. xci. 8. *ſee the Reward of the Wicked.* Which ſaying is not to be underſtood according to carnal Paſſions and Affections, but it is to be look'd upon in the Spirit, for it imports that we are to give unto the Lord our God, the Praiſe for his Righteouſneſs, and to ſay, with *Pſal.* cxix. 137. *Juſtus es Domine, Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy Judgments.* And with *Pſal.* cxlv. 17. *The Lord is Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works.* Thus holy and faithful Souls do delight to ſee the wonderful Judgments of God, yet not according to the Fleſh, ſo as to rejoice over the Deſtruction and Perdition of the Wicked, which would proceed from Self; but according to the Spirit, they take delight, that is, they acknowledge and praiſe the Righteouſneſs of God, who fulfilleth his Word, and is a Righteous God. And at the ſame time, they lament and weep over the Perdition of the Wicked, as our Saviour wept over *Jeruſalem*; Luk. xix. 41. and as *David* wept over *Abſalom*, 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

§. 11. So then, we are here to have a two-fold

fold Reſpect, *viz.* to God, and to Men. If we look upon the Deſtruction of Men, we are juſtly to be ſorrowful; but if we look upon God, we are to praiſe his Juſtice, for He doth wrong unto none.

CHAP. XIII.

How the loving Soul conſiders God, as the Eternal Wisdom.

ACTS xv. 18.

Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World.

§. 1. GOD ordains, governs, moves and regulates all Things according to his unſearchable Wiſdom, as 'tis written, *Iſai.* xlv. 4, 5, *&c. I have even called thee by thy Name: I have ſirnamed thee, though thou haſt not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none elſe, there is no God beſides me.— I form the Light, and create Darkneſs: I make Peace, and create Evil: I the Lord do all theſe things.— Wo unto him that ſtriveth with his Maker: Let the Potſherd ſtrive with the Potſherds of the Earth: Shall the Clay ſay to him that faſhioneth it, What makeſt thou? Or thy Work, He hath no Hands? Wo unto him that ſaith unto his Father, What begetteſt thou? or to the Woman, What haſt thou brought forth? Thus ſaith the Lord, the Holy One of Iſrael, and his Maker, Ask me of Things to come concerning my Sons, and concerning the Work of my Hands command ye me. I have made the Earth, and created Man upon it: I, e-*

A Deſcription of the Wiſdom and admirable Oeconomy of God.

I, even my Hands have stretched out the Heavens, and all their Host have I commanded.

Of the Name *and* Sirname *given us by God.*

§. 2. This is a powerful Testimony concerning the eternal Wisdom, and the wondrous incomprehensible Government of Almighty God, which may be first observed therein, that He hath called every one of us by his *Name*, and hath *sirnamed* us, though we did not know Him, and were not yet in Being. But our Name, by which God calleth us, is our Faith, our outward Calling, and our whole Course of Life. There we are inclosed in, or surrounded with, God's eternal Wisdom and Providence, as to our whole Life, Beginning, Middle, and End, *Psal.* cxxxix. 16. or as to our going out and coming in, as it is expressed so, *Psal.* cxxi. 8. *He telleth the Number of the Stars, He calleth them all by their Names.* That is, He gives them their Courses, Powers and Operations, how much the more doth He do so to Men?

His Wisdom in Government.

Psal. cxlvii. 4.

In Punishment.

§. 3. God forms the Light, and creates Darkness. He makes Peace, and creates Evil, that is, *malum Pœnæ*, the Evil of Punishment, the just Reward of Sin, this He creates and permits; nay, He calls the Sword, and causes an allarm of War to be heard. *Jer.* xlix. 2.

How wisely all things are ordained by him.

Psal. xciv. 8, 9, 10.

§. 4. In a Word, He ordaineth all things wisely. He seeth and heareth all things before, according to the Words of the *Psalmist. Understand ye brutish among the People: And ye Fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the Ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the Eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the Heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth Man knowledge, shall not he know?* Here good King *David* teacheth us, that God hath laid a Mirror of his Omniscience and eternal Wisdom into Man, into the hearing Ear, and seeing Eye, which are two wonderful sensitive Powers of the Humane Body.

A Glass of his Wisdom in Man.

§. 5.

§. 5. Like now, as it is very loathſome to a Man, to hear and ſee any unjuſt or unreaſonable Thing; ſo alſo much more to God, who hath an all-ſeeing Eye, and an all-hearing Ear, Mens Ingratitude muſt be very loathſome, He having ordained all Things by his Wiſdom, for to be ſerviceable unto Men. He hath made the *Sun* by his Wiſdom for to give Light, not unto himſelf, but unto us; the Water affords Drink, not unto it ſelf, but unto us; the Earth brings forth its Fruits, not for it ſelf, but for us; the Fire warms, not it ſelf, but us; the Air gives Breath, not unto it ſelf, but unto us; the Bread feeds, not it ſelf, but us; the Herbs or Plants do not heal or cure themſelves, but us. *How his Wiſdom intends our Good in all things.*

§. 6. The eternal Wiſdom of God hath laid ſo many Powers into the Creatures, and hath ſo wiſely diſtributed them, that they are, as it were, ſo many Hands, through which the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God divides her Treaſures among us, according to the Words of *Job*, Chap. xii. 9. *Who knoweth not in all theſe, that the Hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whoſe Hand is the Soul of every living thing, and the Breath of all Mankind.* And ver. 7. *Ask now the Beaſts, and they ſhall teach thee; and the Fowls of the Air, and they ſhall tell thee*: That *with God is Wiſdom and Strength, He hath Counſel and Underſtanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he ſhutteth up a Man, and there can be no opening.* Job. xxvi. 7, 8. *He ſtretcheth out the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them.* *The Powers in the Creatures are as the Hands of God.*

§. 7. Seeing then that the Lord our God ordaineth all Things by his Wiſdom, He preordaineth alſo our Croſſes; and therefore we are not to murmur, but to praiſe his Wiſdom, and *All things wiſely ordered by God.*

to learn Patience; for things cannot go on otherwise, than they are ordained by God. But not only the things that befal us in particular, are the most wise Ordination of God; but also all great National Plagues, Famine, Pestilence, Wars, and Changes of Kingdoms. And altho' we think there is nothing but Confusion, Perdition and Destruction, yet there is the wisest Order of God: Which we may gather from the Histories of holy Writ, where Famine, Wars, Pestilence, Desolations of the Kingdoms of the World, the Destruction of the *Jewish* Kingdom, and of Empires, the *Babylonian* Captivity, and many more the like are described. *I know* (saith *Solomon*, Eccles. iii. 14.) *that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever: Nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doth it, that Men should fear before him.* And again, Chap. vii. 13. *Consider the Work of God; for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?*

Both as to particular Persons, and as to the Publick.

§. 8. If we now consider it aright, we must own that God could not have ordered things more wisely. So it is also in an especial manner with the Persecutions of the Saints, both in the Old and New-Testament; with our Lord *Jesus Christ*; with the holy Gospel; with the holy Martyrs, and all other Things; in our Sight they seem all to be cross, absurd, and foolish, and yet they are the greatest Wisdom of God.

And then most wisely, when they appear most foolish.

§. 9. Like now as we are to give unto God the Praise of Righteousness, in all his wonderful Judgments; so we are also to give unto him the Praise of Wisdom, in all the wonderful Changes of the World, and in all our Crosses and Sufferings, knowing that He can direct all Evils to a good End, and can turn Evil into Good; so that in all things, how confused soever they may appear unto us, there shineth forth

This Wisdom is to be adored in all Events of the World.

forth his Wisdom, like also his Righteousness doth in all his Judgments.

§. 10. But principally the loving Soul sees the Wisdom of God in the Restoration and Redemption of humane Kind, and in the Renovation of the humane Soul, and of the Faculties thereof. For so it was the good Pleasure of the Wisdom of God, that the corrupt Image of God in Man, should be renewed by the divine substantial Image of God, that is, by CHRIST. For after Man had lost by Sin that blessed Wisdom, that glorious Light of his *Intellect*, by which he did know God rightly, and so was fallen into the utmost Blindness, nay, into eternal Darkness, wherein he should have dwelt for ever; the Son of God, who is the eternal Wisdom of the Father, became Man, and a *Light of Life* unto Men, that He might bring back those that had gone astray; that He might teach the Ignorant, call to himself the Sinners, and re-inkindle in them the *Light* of the Knowledge of God by Faith, and the Holy Ghost; nay, that He might unite himself to the Soul of Man, and might shine forth therein.

But above all, in the Method of restoring Mankind.

By a Renovation through Christ.

(1.) *In the Intellect.*

§. 11. *Secondly*, After the *Will* of Man was entirely averse from God, perverted, and all changed into *Disobedience*, striving against God in all Things, the Son of God was made Man, that He might be unto us a Pattern of *perfect Obedience*; that He might heal our evil Will, implant his good Will into our Hearts, renew our Will through his Holy Ghost, and make us partakers of his holy Obedience by Faith, according to *Gal.* iii. 14. *That we might receive the Promise of the Spirit* through Faith; nay, that He might unite himself to us, and live in us, that so our Will also might be made conformable unto God.

(2.) *In the* Will.

(3.) *In the* Affections.

§. 12. *Thirdly*, Becauſe the Affections of our Heart, and all our Faculties, were in contrariety to God, and every Imagination of the *Thoughts of our Heart, was only Evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. The Son of God, who is Love it ſelf, is become Man, that He might give us a Heart wholly new; that He might plant therein the Love of God, and ſincere Humility, and Meekneſs; that He might take from us the old carnal Heart, and unite himſelf with us, that ſo we might be made of one Heart, Mind, and Spirit with him; all which are Fruits of his moſt holy Incarnation in us.

This Renovation of Man by the eſſential Image of God, the Sum of all Wiſdom.

§. 13. And this is the higheſt Wiſdom of *God*, that by his dear Son, He thus *reneweth Man*. For as God hath created Man by his Wiſdom, to his perfect Image; ſo He hath alſo, by his dear Son, who is eternal Wiſdom, being made Man, created Man anew, and regenerated him to a new Image of *God*, wherein his Wiſdom, Glory, and Righteouſneſs ſhould ſhine for ever. For even therein chiefly the *Image of God* conſiſts. Thus the corrupt Image of God in Man, is renewed by the *ſubſtantial Image of God*, which is CHRIST.

How this Image may be attained, and the Sabbath of the Soul entred into.

§. 14. But foraſmuch as this Renovation of the divine Image in Man, without beholding and contemplating the *original* Love, Goodneſs, Beauty, Power, Righteouſneſs, Holineſs and Wiſdom, cannot be effected: Nor this Conſideration and Contemplation of *God*, according to theſe principal Emanations and Communications of Himſelf, without the *Prayer of the Heart*, whereby the Eye thereof may be conſtantly directed toward the ſovereign *GOOD*, the *Life* and *Truth* of this Image; it is therefore highly expedient that the loving Soul be inſtructed fully in the Method and Practice of this ſort of Prayer. For which end it is purpoſed

to

to lay down in this Place a moſt uſeful Inſtitution, or Introduction, for the ſeeking of divine Wiſdom, ſo as to obtain it of *God*: Whereby the faithful Soul, which is deſirous to enter into the Contemplative Life, ſhall be taught, how the Heart may be ſtirred up and quickned hereto; how the deepeſt ground and very Center of it may be excited and awakened towards God; and how it may be reduced out of the Multiplicity and Tumult of the World, into the Unity and Quiet of the divine Spirit, ſo as an heavenly Sabbath may be poſſeſſed and enjoyed within us, through an holy Reſt and Tranquillity from the Labours of our own corrupt working Faculties, whereby it may pleaſe *God* to work Himſelf, according to his good Will and Pleaſure, in the Heart, and to enkindle therein ſuch a Flame of true Devotion, as to Him is moſt acceptable.

CHAP. XIV.

All that was loſt in *Adam*, is found again in *CHRIST*.

COL. ii. 3.

In CHRIST are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.

The Soul of Man originally endued with perfect Wiſdom.

§. 1. IN the Beginning God formed Man out of the Duſt of the Earth, and breathed into him the Breath of Life, and Man became a living and immortal Soul, accompliſhed with ſolid and perfect Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Holineſs, and Bleſſedneſs, after the Image and

Likeneſs of his Creator. For where there is divine Wiſdom, there is Bleſſedneſs; and where there is Bleſſedneſs, there is divine Wiſdom. *For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with Wiſdom*, Wiſd. vii. 28. Therefore Man wanted nothing in Paradiſe to make him compleatly happy. But when, being ſeduced by the Temptations of the Serpent, he turned away from God, and fell into the Tranſgreſſion, then was this divine Image and Wiſdom in Man quite extinguiſhed, and he became ſubject to the Devil, expoſed to Death, and all Kinds of Miſery. And ſo ſoon as this divine Image was defaced in him by Sin, he could diſcover nothing in himſelf but Miſery, Blindneſs, and the Curſe.

But falls from that happy State of Wiſdom, into a deplorable State of Folly.

§. 2. But that *Adam* and his whole Poſterity might not utterly periſh, God himſelf was made Man, *i. e.* was pleaſed to ſend his Son to take our Nature upon Him, and to be born of a Virgin. This Son of God has, by his holy Life and Doctrine, as by a Copy or Pattern, ſhewn us again the Way of Wiſdom and Salvation in which we muſt walk. For he has not only delivered us from our Sins by his moſt bitter Death; but hath moreover given us a Commandment, *That we ſhould walk, even as he alſo walked*, 1 Joh. ii. 6.

The Deſign of the Incarnation.

§. 3. Wherefore we are begotten again by Him through Faith, to be the Sons of God; nay, we are made Sons of God in and with his own Son. *For as He is, ſo are we alſo in this World*, 1 Joh. iv. 17. And as *all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge are hidden* in the Son of God, it follows, that whatſoever was loſt in *Adam*, is perfectly to be found in *CHRIST*, Rom. v. 18, 19.

We find in Chriſt the good Things loſt in Adam.

§. 4. And if we would, even in this Life, have a Foretaſte of theſe great and glorious Promiſes, it muſt be obtained by Prayer, diligent

Nothing given us without Prayer.

gent Searching, and continual Knocking. For no Man can have admiſſion into the Kingdom of God, unleſs he walk in the new Birth, and beg it earneſtly of God. No Man can be delivered from the Power of Sin and the Devil, unleſs he repent, and offer up his Prayers in the Name of Chriſt. For though Chriſt has purchaſed for us all manner of good Things; yet without Faith ſhall no Man be partaker of them; and the Properties of Faith are, *to pray, to ſeek, and to knock.* In a Word; by Prayer only we are entituled to thoſe *good and perfect Gifts which come down from above from the Father of Lights,* Jam. i. 17.

A Prayer that we may find all things in Chriſt.

O *Eternal God and Father, teach me, I pray thee, by thy Holy Spirit, that as I have loſt all by dying in* Adam, *ſo I may recover all by riſing again in Chriſt. Grant that I may daily die unto my ſelf, by continual Mortification and Repentance, and devote and give up my ſelf entirely to Thee; that ſo all the good Things I have loſt, may be reſtored to me, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

CHAP. XV.

The Miſchiefs that follow the Neglect of Prayer.

JAM. iv. 2.

Ye have not, becauſe ye ask not.

Why God commands us to pray.

§. 1. THE Neglect of Prayer is a Violation of the Commandments of God and Chriſt, who command us to *Pray without* Matt. vii. 7.

ceaſing, Luk. xviii. 1, *&c.* not for his ſake, for He well knows what things we ſtand in need of, *Matt.* vi. 32. but for our own, that we may have a Portion of the Treaſures and Kingdom of God. He therefore that lives in the Neglect of Prayer, is a Breaker of the firſt and third Commandment, a Blaſphemer of God, bringing voluntary Deſtruction upon himſelf.

Miſchiefs of neglecting it.

1. *It is a Breach of two Commandments.*

§. 2. He that neglects the Duty of Prayer, is a Deſpiſer of the Promiſes annex'd to the Performance of that Duty. *Call upon me, and I will deliver thee*, Pſal. l. 5. *Ask, and ye ſhall receive*, Joh. xvi. 24. thereby repreſenting God as unmindful of his Promiſes, or not able to fulfil them.

2. *He that deſpiſes Prayer, deſpiſes God.*

§. 3. By the Neglect of Prayer, our Faith, which is the great Treaſure and Foundation of the inward Man, does by degrees periſh and decay. For not by the Arm or Power of Fleſh, but by Faith in Chriſt, are we to conquer Sin, Death, and the Devil, 1 *Joh.* v. 4. Prayer is the Nouriſhment of Faith, and this is that Wiſdom and eternal Life, which we muſt ſeek for by diligent Prayer.

3. *The Neglect of Prayer is the Decay of Faith.*

§. 4. The Lord *Jeſus* flies from them that deſpiſe Prayer; ſo that they are blinded and walk in Darkneſs, knowing neither themſelves nor God, but are Strangers to his Will. They ſhut the Kingdom of Heaven againſt themſelves; and being deſtitute of Light to know the Will of God, they fall into many Dangers and Temptations, and ſometimes into Deſpair: Whereas, on the contrary, where there is Spirit and Faith, there the Spirit of the World has no Power.

4. *Chriſt the true Light, flies from thoſe that neglect Prayer.*

§. 5. He that neglects Prayer, runs headlong into a State of carnal Security, and all Kinds of Iniquity. Such a Man is not ſenſible how deeply he is engaged in Sin; but ruſhes violently

5. *He that neglects Prayer, is guilty of Ingratitude and all Sins.*

violently into all the Avenues of Deſtruction which lie open to receive him. The good Things of this World which God has given him, ſuch as Health and Riches, he regards as things that came by Chance, or purchaſed by his own Labour; and upon that Account, has no notion of Gratitude to his Creator and Benefactor.

§. 6. As Man, ſince his Fall, is expoſed to continual Dangers, both of Body and Soul, ſo is he particularly in Danger from the Devil, from evil Spirits and wicked Men, who, like their Father the Devil, are continually plotting the Deſtruction of the Righteous. Whoſoever therefore neglecteth Prayer ſhall be, in the midſt of theſe Temptations, like a Ship toſt in a Storm, without help,or hopes of eſcape.

6. *He that neglects Prayer, is expoſed to the Devil and his Agents.*

§. 7. Such a one alſo leads a moſt unhappy Life; he is in continual Difficulties and Fears, being perplexed, doubtful, and uneaſie about the Succeſs of his Affairs. His Head and Hands are full of Buſineſs, yet he ſees but little Fruit of his Labours, and even that little in the End is unproſperous. Therefore though the Scripture ſays: *That the Workers of Iniquity do proſper and flouriſh for a Seaſon*: Yet it adds; *that in a Moment they ſhall conſume away*, Pſal. xxxvii. They are *like an Arrow ſhot at a Mark, whoſe paſſage through the Air cannot be known*; or *like a Bird which flieth through the Air*; or *like the Smoak which is diſperſed here and there with a Tempeſt*, Wiſd. v. 11, 12, 14. *Like the Duſt which the Wind ſcattereth away from the Face of the Earth*, Pſal. i. 4. cxxix. 6. On the other hand, they that ſeek unto God by Prayer, *ſhall flouriſh like a Palm-Tree, and grow like a Cedar in Lebanon*, Pſal. xcii. 13. And *though many are the Afflictions of the Righteous*, Pſal. xxxiv. 20. yet the Wicked undergo a hundred times more

7. *The ſame is unhappy in Life and Death.*

Pain

Lev. xxvi. 20. Pain and Trouble to go to Hell, than the Righteous do to obtain Heaven.

A Prayer. §. 8. *MOST merciful and compassionate Father, Thou knowest that Man maketh himself miserable by his own negligence and sloth, whilst he transgresseth thy Commands, and neglects the Duty of Prayer, contemning and slighting thy most certain and faithful Promises. But because Thou art a Lover of thy Creatures, and art not willing that any should perish, therefore Thou dost so passionately and earnestly invite us to the Exercise of Prayer. Give me Grace continually to lay this to Heart, that I may be able to offer up my Prayers aright, through thy Son Jesus Christ, and be delivered from the Punishments and Miseries due to the Despisers of that holy Duty.* Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

The Benefits of continual PRAYER.

JOH. xvi. 24.

Ask, and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full.

The Benefits of Prayer. §. 1. MAN, since his Fall, is become slothful and unactive towards every thing that is good. He therefore that would escape out of this unhappy State, and the Destruction that will certainly attend it, must stir up himself by Prayer, and by holy Meditation conquer his aversion to divine Things,

Things, and devoutly conſider with himſelf the Advantages of Prayer. Let him think, that he does thereby praiſe, honour, and adore the eternal, living, and true God; that he does not worſhip any ſtrange God; but offers up his moſt earneſt Supplications to the one only and true God, (whoſe Commands, like an obedient Child, he ought to obey,) and ſhew forth the Praiſes of his Creator, Father, and Saviour.

He that prays aright, gives Glory to God.

§. 2. He that prays, does not deſpiſe the Promiſes of God, but teſtifies by his Prayers that he ſets a juſt Value upon them, acknowledging that God is True, and that He neither can nor will Lye.

2. *And to his Truth.*

§. 3. Prayer is the Life of Faith, making it flouriſh and proſper like a Tree by the River ſide, and Faith is the Root of all that is good in us: Faith is our Power, our ſpiritual Conſolation, our Strength againſt all our Enemies and Temptations, yea, Faith is our *Victory that overcometh the World*, 1 Joh. v. 4. and by conſequence, every thing that oppoſes and hinders us in our ſpiritual Warfare.

3. *The Exerciſe of Prayer is the encreaſe of Faith.*

§. 4. By Prayer, we *receive the Holy Spirit*, Luk. xi. 13. Zech. xii. 10. *i. e.* By Prayer, we make room, and (as it were) give leave to the Holy Spirit to operate and exert his Power in us: By this means to come *to make his abode with us*, Joh. xiv. 23. By Prayer, we obtain the true Light and Knowledge of God, ſo as perfectly to underſtand his Will. Laſtly, by this we abide in his Kingdom, and are partakers of the Bleſſings of Heaven.

4. *Prayer encreaſes the Gifts of the Spirit.*

§. 5. By Prayer, we ſhake off carnal Security, reſiſt Sin, and by vanquiſhing Fleſh and Blood, *Fight the good Fight, and hold Faith and a good Conſcience*, 1 Tim. i. 19.

5. *Wreſtles with Fleſh and Blood.*

§. 6.

6. *Fights against the Kingdom of Satan.*

§. 6. By Prayer, we oppose Temptations, Dangers, Afflictions, the Devil, and wicked Men. For Prayer is a strong Tower of Defence against our Enemies, and the holy Fortress to which we must have recourse by Prayer; *Eph.* vi. 17. *Prov.* xi. 9, 10. *Psal.* xxxi. 3. and though the Devil and wicked Men make never so great Opposition, yet *all Things work together for good, to them that love God.*

7. *Prayer is the Spring of spiritual Peace and Joy.*

§. 7. *Lastly*, He that continually watcheth unto Prayer, may always thankfully rejoice in the Holy Ghost, according to the Doctrine of St. *Paul*, 1 Thes. v. 17. *Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing; in all Things give thanks.* For the comfortable Addresses made to God, the eternal King, by Prayer, are an effectual Remedy against Sorrow, Trouble, Misery, and Affliction, and produce Joy, Peace and Tranquillity in the Hearts of the Faithful; and when our Prayers are, we are assured, that all our righteous Designs shall prosper in our Hands, *whilst we cast our Care upon God*, 1 Pet. iv. 7. *The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing*, Phil. iv. 6, 7. and Psal. xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy Way unto the Lord, and put thy Trust in Him, and he shall bring it to pass.* For all Solicitude arises from a Distrust of God; which naturally proceeds from the Neglect of Prayer. On the contrary, Faith and Prayer give us Confidence towards God, and are the proper Antidote against all Anxiety, and trouble of Mind.

A short Prayer.

HELP *me, O Lord my God, that I may continually call to Mind, that it is for my own sake alone, that Thou inviteſt and compelleſt me to the Exercise of Prayer. Rouze Thou me, and I shall arise; awaken Thou me, and I shall awake, and follow Thee, my Saviour only.* Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

The true Chriſtian rather chooſeth the narrow Way in CHRIST, than the broad Way in *Adam*.

ROM. v. 3.

We Glory in TRIBULATIONS.

§. 1. THE Scripture teacheth us, that when *Adam* was placed in Paradiſe, God ſhewed him the Tree of Good and Evil, and forbid him the Uſe of it, *Gen.* ii. 8, &c. ſo that *Adam* was placed between Time and Eternity; Life and Death, Light and Darkneſs were ſet before him, that he might qualifie himſelf for eternal Glory in the narrow Way of the Croſs. Our Caſe is juſt the ſame. For ſince the deplorable Fall of *Adam*, Chriſt comes to us, and endeavours to draw us from the broad Way in *Adam*, to the narrow Way, which is Himſelf; and this He does gently and without Violence, reſolving to force no Man either to Salvation or Condemnation. He ſhews us the Way by his preventing Grace, which is beſtowed on all Men without exception. For *Chriſt* ſays: Matt. vii. 13, 14. *Enter in at the ſtrait Gate; for wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way that leadeth to Deſtruction; and many there be that go in thereat. But ſtrait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.*

The ſtanding of Adam *at the Entrance of two Ways.* Gen. ii. 8.

Chriſt compelleth no Man, but draweth gently all by his preventing Grace.

§. 2. And

2. *The two Ways, one in* Chriſt, *and the other in* Adam.

§. 2. And here we plainly ſee two Roads or Paths drawn out before us; the one is *the Way of the World*, in which moſt People walk; becauſe they continue in *Adam*, and refuſe Chriſt: The other is *the Way of God*, which few walk in; becauſe they think the broad Way in *Adam* to be better. Many are the Difficulties attending both theſe Paths. If you conform your ſelf to the World, you ſhall meet with many Troubles and Vexations; and being not eſtabliſhed in the Truth of God, ſhall at laſt receive the Reward of your Labours in the ſecond Death, with Satan and his Angels. And if you enter into the Way of God through Chriſt, you muſt expect to ſuffer with Chriſt, from the Oppoſitions of this evil World: 2 *Tim.* ii. 12. But then your Heart ſhall be conſtantly filled with the refreſhing Conſolations of the Spirit of Truth, and in the End, you ſhall obtain everlaſting Life.

Victory the Reward of faithful Prayer.

Theſe two Ways of Light and Darkneſs how paſſed, and the Conſequents of each.

§. 3. He that Prays, fights againſt the Devil and his own corrupt Nature, overcomes himſelf, the Devil, and all the Enemies of his Salvation, and ſhall at laſt, with Chriſt his Head, enter into everlaſting Reſt. But he that lives in neglect of Prayer, makes no progreſs in the Conqueſt of his ſpiritual Enemies, but, like a miſerable Slave of the World, is condemned to the vileſt Drudgeries, and ſhall at laſt, with the Prince of Darkneſs, be condemned to everlaſting Miſery. But it is better to fight now, and to enter triumphantly into everlaſting Glory; than not to fight, and yet endure many Difficulties, and at laſt be doomed to everlaſting Deſtruction.

A holy Aſpiration.

O *If Men would but conſider theſe Things, I doubt not but they would quickly loath and deſpiſe this preſent World; and would hate and de-*

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ny themſelves, and follow Chriſt alone, in the narrow Way of the Croſs. That we may therefore ſeriouſly lay theſe things to Heart; that we may renounce the old Adam *in us, and put on the new Man* CHRIST JESUS, *and at laſt, through the narrow Way, enter into everlaſting Life, may God grant, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

CHAP. XVIII.

Containing certain Heads of Meditation, whereby the Soul of Man may be elevated towards God.

JER. xxiii. 23.

Am I a God at Hand, ſaith the Lord, and not a God afar off?

Introduction to Prayer.

IT is moſt certainly of great Uſe to young Beginners, to lay before them certain Heads, which may ſerve as preparatory Awakenings and Encouragements of their Minds, to the Exerciſe of *Mental Prayer*, which is that worſhip in Spirit and in Truth, which God requires of all his Servants.

Conſiderations.

Firſt then, we we muſt conſider; That *God knows what things we have need of before we ask Him*, Matt. vi. 8. 1.

2*dly*, That God draws, invites, and encourages us to the Exerciſe of Prayer, and aſſuredly promiſes that He will hear our Prayers. *Pſal.* l. 15. 2.

3*dly*,

3. 3*dly*, That God is no reſpecter of Perſons, but has an equal regard for all Mankind, *Acts* x. 34.

4. 4*thly*, That he is as ſinful who preſumes to pray, upon the Opinion of his own Righteouſneſs, Merit, and Holineſs, as he that is afraid to pray out of a Senſe of his own Sins and Unworthineſs. *Luk.* xviii. 11.

5. 5*thly*, That God is not confined to any certain Place, where we ought to worſhip Him; but that He is every where to be found, and is always *nigh to them that call upon Him*, Joh. iv. 21, 22.

6. 6*thly*, That God is in his own Eternity unchangeable, and not confined to any certain Time; but is always attentive to the Prayers of his Servants.

7. 7*thly*, That God doth prevent our Prayers, and gives us both natural and ſupernatural Bleſſings, which yet, without Prayer, no body can truly enjoy.

And I doubt not but that theſe Conſiderations will renew and awaken every Soul that ſhall duly attend to them. *Eph.* v. 14. will purge them from Darkneſs and Errour, will eſtabliſh them in the Foundation of Truth, will elevate them towards God, and will enflame them with a lively Devotion. For from them flow theſe following Doctrines.

Doct. 1. *Firſt*, That God commands and encourages us to pray, not for his own ſake, as if he were ignorant of our Wants, but for our ſakes, that being quickned by Prayer, we might know and acknowledge them our ſelves.

2. 2*dly*, That God doth not ſtand in need of any tedious Declarations of our Neceſſities, but knows even before we ask Him, what things we have need of. *Iſa.* lxv. 24. *Pſal.* cxxxix. 2.

3*dly*

3*dly*, That God, who never ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth, needeth not to be awakened by our Cries, Faſtings, and Watchings; but that all theſe Exerciſes are profitable for Man, to awaken and rouze him from the Sleep of Sin. *Pſal.* xxxiii. 18. xxxiv. 16. 3.

4*thly*, That God is a thouſand times more ready to give, than Man is to receive. *Jer.* xxxii. 41. 4.

5*thly*, That the Goodneſs and Mercy of God towards Mankind is infinite, *Pſal.* ciii. 13. but that the Lazineſs and Sloth of Men in Praying, Seeking, and Knocking, is intolerable. *Matt.* vii. 7. 5.

6*thly*, That God is faithful and juſt in all his Works, and is by no means the Cauſe of our Blindneſs, Infirmities, Ignorance, or Miſeries; but that wretched Man himſelf is in Fault, by neglecting to pray, or ſeek for the Remedies. *Deut.* xxxii. 4. *Pſal.* xcii. 7. 6.

7*thly*, That the true Worſhipper may at all Times, and in all Places, offer up his Prayers in Spirit and in Truth to God the Father, through Chriſt; provided he do not unqualifie himſelf. *John* iv. 21. *Luke* xviii. 1, &c. 7.

8*thly*, That whoſoever neglecteth Prayer, depriveth himſelf of the bleſſed Opportunities of ſpeaking to God. *Pſalm* xix. 15. By this means, the Sinner is his own Puniſhment. 8.

9*thly*, That the diligent Worſhipper doth good to himſelf; but not of himſelf, but by the preventing Grace of God, which is freely applied to all Men without Exception. 9.

But let him that is unacquainted with the Heads of Meditation aforeſaid, know that he has not yet taſted of the Truth which is in *Chriſt Jeſus*; but that he who knows them, and believes them not, is guilty of a very great Sin: And laſtly, He that believes them, and

yet is unactive, and does not ſtir up himſelf to the Practice of them; but, on the other Hand, lives on, from Day to Day, in a State of Doubt and Indifference, is the greateſt Sinner of all, and ſhall be beaten with many more Stripes than he who knew not his Lord's Will, and therefore did it not, *Luke* xii. 47. And let ſuch an one as this look carefully to himſelf, that he may be ſeriouſly converted, and not periſh in his Sins.

A ſhort Prayer.

O *LORD, and merciful Father, awaken me by thy Holy Spirit, that I may not only know theſe Things, but may practiſe them by a lively Faith, and become a true Worſhipper in Spirit and Truth.* Amen.

CHAP. XIX.

That God knoweth what Things we ſtand in need of before we ask Him.

PSAL. cxxxix. 2.

Thou underſtandeſt my Thoughts long before.

§. 1. THE Truth of this is confirmed by our Bleſſed Saviour: *Matt.* vi. 8. *Your Father knoweth what things you have need of, before you ask Him.* And by *David*, Pſal. xciv. 9. *He that planted the Ear, ſhall he not hear?* And by St. *Paul*: Heb. iv. 12. *He is a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart.* For our God is not as Man, that ſtands in need of a long Story of our Neceſſities. For all the

God always hears our Prayers, without any regard to time.

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poſſible Succeſſions of Time are in his Sight but as one ſingle Moment, in which all Things, both paſt and to come, are beheld as actually preſent. Therefore he has number'd the Hairs of our Heads before we were born, and underſtandeth all our Thoughts before we pray. In a Word, All things are naked and open in his Sight. Theſe and ſuch like Meditations may be of ſingular Uſe, for the Encouragement of young Beginners to the Exerciſe of Prayer; ſo that they may always have certain Sentences of Scripture ready at hand, upon the Uſe of which, they may meditate, and apply to themſelves, by comprizing the Senſe of them in a ſhort Prayer. Which may be eaſily underſtood by thoſe that are exerciſed herein.

§. 2. A Man that walks abroad in an open ſpatious Field, and in a clear Day, finds himſelf encompaſſed all round with Light; which Light, if it were Spiritual, as it is Corporeal, would even penetrate the Spirit it ſelf. Juſt ſo are all the Creatures, viſible and inviſible, in the Sight of God: He diſcerneth and comprehendeth all Things, and nothing can be hidden from Him. *The Darkneſs, is no darkneſs with Him; but the Night is as clear as the Day*, (as it is in *Pſal.* cxxxix. 12.) who is Himſelf the All-ſeeing Eye, and to whom all Things are as clear, as a Mote in a tranſparent Chryſtal would be to our bodily Eyes; *Wiſd.* i. 7. And this Conſideration is of great Uſe to the unexperienced young Beginners, in order to purge their Hearts from the thick Clouds of Darkneſs and Errour, to quicken them in Prayer; by which, when we are truly rouzed and awakened, we diſcover many great and noble Truths that have hitherto been hid from our Eyes. Many are apt to think, that God knows and ſees no more than they

A familiar Illuſtration hereof.

Wiſd. vii. 21.

God knows our Thoughts, and ſearches our Hearts.

themſelves do; which is the Effect of egregious Blindneſs and Ignorance, and will deſerve a proportionable Puniſhment.

A ſhort Prayer.

ALmighty, *Everlaſting God and Father, the true Searcher of Hearts,* (Pſal. vii. 10.) Rev. ii. 9. *and the Judge of all our ſecret Thoughts, who ſeeſt,* Heb. iv. 12. *knoweſt, and heareſt all our Deſigns and Contrivances before they are brought to paſs: Behold, I appear before Thee, to confeſs my Neceſſities, not with any deſign to awaken Thee by my Cries, as if Thou wert ignorant of me, or my Concerns; but to ſtir up my ſelf to know and conſider, that* Matt. x. 30. *Thou knoweſt all my Neceſſities, and that the very Hairs of my Head are numbred by Thee. Aſſiſt me, deareſt Father, that I may truly know and conſider theſe Things, and that my Soul may ſweetly reſt in thy good Pleaſure, and I may wait upon Thee in true Reſignation and Obedience.* Amen.

CHAP. XX.

That God invites, entices, encourages, and engages all Men to the Exerciſe of Prayer, and promiſes to hear their Petitions.

JOEL ii. 32.

Every one that calleth upon the Name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved.

God earneſtly requires us to pray.

§. 1. THIS ought chiefly to be conſidered. For it is not ſufficient to know, That God knows all Things; but we muſt alſo

alſo remember, that God commands us to pray, and promiſes to hear us. Thus *Joh.* xvi. 23. *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you.* Matt. vii. 8. *Every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.* Luk. xviii. 1. *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Jam. i. 5. *If any one lack Wiſdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him.* 1 Joh. v. 14. *Whatſoever we ſhall ask according to his Will, He heareth us.* Matt. xxi. 22. *All things whatſoever ye ſhall ask in Prayer believing, ye ſhall receive.* In all which Places, both a Command and a Promiſe are expreſſed; which muſt needs make an Impreſſion upon every Man that has not an Heart of Stone; and he that does not believe them, is in a deſperate State, and deſerves not the Name of a Man.

Neglect of Prayer a dangerous Sin.

§. 2. But if theſe things are true, and acknowledged to be ſo, Why then do we not believe them? Why do we not pray? Why are not our Prayers heard? Why do we not receive the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit? Verily, becauſe we do not pray with Faith, nor wait upon God with Conſtancy and Patience. For the Property of true Faith, is to ſubmit our Selves to God, in a quiet and peaceable Reſignation of Mind; but he that wavereth, is unfaithful and unconſtant, and maketh his own Prayers void, and muſt not think to receive any thing from God. Moreover, he denyeth the Truth and Power of God, making Him either unable or unwilling to ſupply our Wants. Both theſe are Signs of a perverſe Spirit.

A juſt Expoſtulation hereupon.

§. 3. On the other hand, Faith gives quietneſs to the Soul, and makes it capable of Divine Grace. God requires nothing from Man but that he ſhould be quiet, and reſt from all

The Reſt of the Soul.

his Works, and especially from himself. The Spirit and Mind of Man are like Waters, upon which the Spirit of God is perpetually moving. So soon as our Spirit is quiet, and at rest from the impetuous Motions of worldly Thoughts, then God rests upon it, and speaks forth the Word of his Power into our quiet and still Waters; and the Moment of this divine Influx is of more Value than the whole World. * Still Waters are easily warmed by the Sun, but violent and rapid Streams seldom or never. Infidelity does sacrilegiously rob God of his Honour, destroying the very Names of Faith and Truth. This changes the Christian into an Heathen and Atheist, and, without Repentance, will sink him into everlasting Destruction.

*See German Divinity, *ch.* 8. *and* Thauler *up and down.*

A short Prayer.

§. 4. O *Eternal, Faithful, and Righteous* GOD, *who canst not lye; I know that Thou dost graciously invite, encourage, and compel all Men, for their own infinite Advantage, to pray unto Thee; and dost offer thy Grace and Mercy equally to them all, without distinction or partiality. Grant, I beseech thee, dearest Father, that I may seriously lay these things to Heart, and attain to a true, solid, and upright Faith, and not be deaf to the Invitations of thy infinite Mercy; but may constantly and cheerfully submit my self to Thee, and expect with Patience the Manifestation of thy Light within me.* Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

That God is no Reſpecter of Perſons, but has an impartial Love for all his Creatures.

PSAL. cxlv. 9.

The Lord is loving unto every Man, and his Mercy is over all his Works.

God commands all Men to pray, and promiſes to hear their Prayers.

§. 1. I Am now indeed convinced, that God knows my Neceſſities better than I can diſcover them to Him; that He has commanded Prayer, and promiſed to hear it. But I am not yet fully ſatisfied, whether I in particular am not excluded from the Benefit of theſe Promiſes? Come, then, let us now proceed to ſhew that God is no reſpecter of Perſons, in Oppoſition to thoſe blind Guides, who, by their falſe Interpretations of ſome Places of Holy Scripture, as particularly *Rom.* ix. 13. Mal. i. 2. and the like, have endeavoured to prove, that God has an averſion to ſome particular Perſons, and a partial fondneſs for others, contrary to the plain and indiſputable Teſtimonies of holy Scripture, which we ought firmly to fix in our Minds, that we may not be perverted by the falſe Gloſſes of unreaſonable Men.

He accepts no Man's Perſon.

§. 2. Acts x. 34. *Of a Truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of Perſons: But in every Nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with Him.*

Deut. x. 17. *The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible,*

rible, which regardeth not Perſons, nor taketh Reward. He doth execute the Judgment of the Fatherleſs and Widow, and loveth the Stranger, in giving him Food and Raiment.

Gal. ii. 6. *God accepteth no Man's Perſon.*

Col. iii. 25. *There is no reſpect of Perſons* (with God.)

Wiſd. vi. 7. *For he which is Lord over all, ſhall fear no Man's Perſon, neither ſhall he ſtand in awe of any Man's Greatneſs, for He hath made the Small and Great, and careth for all alike.*

Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 12. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live. As for the Wickedneſs of the Wicked, he ſhall not fall thereby in the Day, that he turneth from his wickedneſs: None of his Sins that he hath committed, ſhall be mentioned unto him.*

1 Tim. i. 15, 16. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World to ſave Sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cauſe I obtained Mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all Long-ſuffering, for a Pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to Life everlaſting.*

1 Tim. ii. 4. *God will have ALL Men to be ſaved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth.*

2 Pet. iii. 9. *God is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that ALL ſhould come to Repentance.*

God loves all Men alike.

§. 3. Theſe and ſuch like Teſtimonies of Scripture, ought to be deeply imprinted on our Minds, that every one may know, that all Men are equally dear to God; that all Men were created by Him according to his Image, and redeemed by *Jeſus Chriſt*. Moreover, God has ſworn by Himſelf, that He deſireth not the Death of a Sinner. Hence it comes, that God aſſiſts us all by his preventing Grace, not waiting

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ing till we are worthy to receive it. He came to us, before we could come to Him: He knew us, before we knew Him: Yea, He loveth us, though we continue in Enmity with Him; according to that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* v. 10. *Whilſt we were yet Enemies, we were reconciled to God.* He therefore is impiouſly Blind, that dares aſſert, that God does not love all Men alike. Such a one blaſphemes the God of Heaven, and accuſeth Him of Injuſtice to Mankind.

How we are to underſtand thoſe Paſſages of Scripture that ſpeak of God's blinding the Eyes and hardening the Hearts.

§. 4. But whereas God is ſaid, (*Mal.* i. 2. and *Rom.* ix.) to have *loved Jacob, and hated Eſau*, we muſt by no means underſtand it of eternal Reprobation; but of his being cut off from the earthly Bleſſings or Inheritance of the Land of Promiſe. And though we are all Sinners, yet God has a greater Regard for thoſe that love Him, than for thoſe that continue in their Sins and Blindneſs, neither acknowledging God for their Father, nor bringing forth the Fruits of Repentance. God takes no pleaſure in the Infidelity and Wickedneſs of theſe Men; but rather deſires that all ſhould be ſaved. And whereas it is ſaid, *Rom.* ix. 18. That *He hath Mercy on whom He will have mercy; and whom He will he hardeneth.* We muſt know, that He hardeneth none, but thoſe, who by their Infidelity and Impenitence have hardned themſelves. And ſuch as theſe, the holy Spirit doth at length, with great reluctance, leave to themſelves; and being thus forſaken, they eaſily fall into ſuch a State of Obduration, as cannot admit of Repentance. And whereas it is ſaid, *Rom.* ix. 16. That, *It is not of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy*: It is plain, that God doth elect and prevent us by his Grace, and not we our ſelves, and that He is the Author and Giver

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of all our Graces, ſo that whatſoever good we do, is owing to Him, and not to our ſelves.

The abſurd and dangerous Application of them to an eternal Reprobation.

§. 5. And this is the true Interpretation of thoſe Places, which ſome moroſe ſurly Tempers have ſo interpreted, as if God had decreed from all Eternity to damn the greateſt Part of Mankind, and (as the Poets feigned of *Saturn*) to devour his own Children. A Doctrine that tends directly to ſubvert the Fundamentals of our holy Faith, to precipitate Men into Deſpair, or (as the Homilies of the Church of *England* ſpeak) *into wretchleſneſs of moſt unclean Living*, as appears by woful Experience: From all which Snares and Deceits of the Devil, Good Lord deliver us. *Amen.*

A ſhort Prayer.

O *Eternal and moſt Righteous God, who acceptest not the Perſons of Men; but art ſo juſt in thy Diſpenſations towards us all, as to prevent us with thy Grace and Favour, not waiting till we are already worthy, but beſtowing thy preventing Grace to make us ſo! Teach me, by thy Holy Spirit, gratefully to acknowledge thy boundleſs Mercy towards us. Let thy Light ariſe in my Heart, that I may not with the wicked World diſown that Grace which Thou haſt already beſtowed upon me, which is none other than that Treaſure hidden in the Field, the Earneſt, or rather the Poſſeſſion, of the Inheritance of the Saints; but may diligently ſearch after it, find it, taſt it, and enjoy it.* Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

That it is equally ſinful to pray to God upon the Preſumption of our own Merit, as it would be to forbear upon the Account of our Unworthineſs.

LUKE xv. 21.

Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.

§. 1. HE that prayeth upon the Preſumption of his own Holineſs and Piety, walketh not in the direct and plain Path of the Children of God; but turns to the *right Hand*, outruns his Saviour, and, like a ſacrilegious Robber, deprives Him of the Honour due unto Him, (for He alone is our Righteouſneſs, our Holineſs, and our Sanctification,) and depends entirely upon his own unprofitable Works; not acknowledging the Merit of Chriſt alone, but depending upon Humane Righteouſneſs, and believing that God hears our Prayers, not for the ſake of *Jeſus Chriſt*, but for the ſake of his own good Works. But this is directly contrary to *Pſal.* cxxx. 4. *If thou Lord wilt be extreme to mark what we have done amiſs, who ſhall abide it? but with the Lord there is Mercy, and with our God is plenteous Redemption.* And a Man may as well ſay, that the Operation of his Eyes cauſes the Light of the Sun; as that his own Righteouſneſs is the Cauſe of his receiving the Grace of God. Therefore *Abraham*,

1. *We muſt not pray to God, preſuming on any Worthineſs of our own.*

ham, Iſaac, Jacob, and *Elias,* &c. were all ſaved by Grace, joining all in that Petition, *Enter not into judgment with thy Servant, O Lord,* &c. *Pſal.* cxliii. 2.

2. *We muſt not forbear to pray out of a Senſe of our own* Unworthineſs. *Abyſſus abyſſum invocat.*

§. 2. Moreover, he that neglects to pray out of a Senſe of his manifold Tranſgreſſions, judging himſelf upon that Account unworthy to ſpeak unto God, he alſo turns too much to *the left Hand,* i. e. ſinks too deep into the Senſe of his own Miſery and Unworthineſs, affronting the Son of God, and (without Repentance) running into deſpair, whilſt he thinks that the Paſſion and Death of Chriſt, are not ſufficient to atone for the Sins of the whole World. And againſt this Temptation, let us call to mind what we are told, *Rom.* v. 20. *That where Sin hath abounded, there Grace doth much more abound.* For our Miſery implores the Mercy of God, our Weakneſs engages his Power, our Unworthineſs his Majeſty, our Unrighteouſneſs his Righteouſneſs.

1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World to ſave Sinners, of whom I am chief.*

Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and live.*

Rom. viii. 1. *There is now no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Ezek. xxxiii. 12. *As for the Wickedneſs of the Wicked, he ſhall not fall thereby in the Day that he turneth from his wickedneſs.* Chap. xviii. 21.

Pſal. xxxii. 6. Eccleſ. vii. 16. *Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thy ſelf overwiſe.*

1 Joh. i. 9. *If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.*

Pſal.

Pſal. lxxxv. 12. *Righteouſneſs hath looked down from Heaven.*

§. 3. Certainly, if I ſhould reſolve not to pray till I know my ſelf worthy, I ſhall never do it at all. And if I ſhould not deſire God to beſtow upon me his Grace and Favour, till by my own Strength I became juſt and holy, I ſhould never obtain any thing. Alas, poor Man, what canſt thou beſtow upon Him, who ſtandeth not in need of thy *Goods*? Rom. xi. 35. Or what canſt thou obtain by the Workings of thy corrupt Nature, which, however ſpecious in thine own Eyes, are of no value in the Sight of God? *Rom.* iii. 24. Verily nothing at all. Away then with all thoſe who glory in their own Righteouſneſs, and pretend to juſtifie themſelves; yea, let all Creatures keep ſilence before God. Thine own worthineſs will here avail thee nothing, and thine unworthineſs ſhall do thee no harm; for the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, thy Saviour, is he that *forgiveth thine Unrighteouſneſs, and covereth all thy Sin*, Pſal. xxxii. 1. But rather conclude with thy ſelf: *That as a Drop of Water* is ſwallowed up in the Sea, ſo are all my Tranſgreſſions in the boundleſs and incomprehenſible Mercies of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

3. *The great Unreaſonableneſs of both theſe miſtakes about Prayer.*

A ſhort Prayer.

O *Merciful and Compaſſionate Father! who teacheſt me in thy holy Word, how I ought to live the Life of thy Son* JESUS CHRIST, *and walk in the ſtrait Path, turning neither to the right Hand, nor to the left; that I may neither fall from a vain Preſumption of my own Piety; nor be caſt into Deſpair by the gloomy Proſpect of my Guilt, and ſo die in my Sins. Grant that I may ſeriouſly conſider, that neither my good Works can merit, nor my Sins hinder the Emanations of the Grace of Chriſt my Redeemer; that ſo I may continue firm*

and

and resolute amidst all the Temptations of mine Enemy, that I may neither be misled by the Devil of Presumption and spiritual Pride, that walketh at Noon-day; nor be afraid of the destroying Angel of Despair, that walketh in Darkness; but that having conquered the Weakness of my Nature, I may continue stedfast in the Faith, filled with spiritual Joy and Consolation. Let thy Grace, Blessed Lord Jesus, begin, improve, and perfect this good Work in me. Amen.

CHAP. XXIII.

The true Worshipper seeks not after God in any one certain *Place*, but finds Him every where in Spirit and in Truth.

JOH. iv. 21.

The Hour cometh, when neither in this Mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, ye shall worship the Father; for the true Worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.

GOD is every where to be found.

§. 1. *AM I a God at Hand,* (saith the Lord) *and not a God afar off*? Jer. xxiii. 23. Where then shall we find Him? Must we look for Him in the consecrated Temples? Must we seek Him in the Ends of the Earth? Must we search for Him in the Regions of Darkness; or upon the Top of Mount *Tabor*? No, no, but *in Spirit and in Truth*, Joh. iv. 23. We are indeed frequently forced to the Fatigue of long

long Journeys to make our Complaints, and beg the Protection of the Princes of this World; but God is every where, *He filleth Heaven and Earth*, Jer. xxiii. 24. and is nearer to all Creatures, than they are to themſelves. *He is above all, and through all, and in us all*, Eph. iv. 6. The utmoſt Dimenſion of Space, and even the boundleſs Extent of Eternity, appear to Him but as a ſingle Point, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 7. As a Man that walks at Noon-day in an open Field is environ'd with Light, whether he diſcern it or no; ſo are all Creatures ſurrounded with the Preſence of God, *in whom they live, and move, and have their Being*; and theſe are properly the Waters upon which the Spirit of God moves, penetrating through all Beings and all Spirits, though never ſo pure and glorious.

Prayer not to be confined to any certain Place.

§. 2. God is therefore always near to us, though many of us are not ſo to Him, having no more Perception of the Communications of his Preſence, than a blind Man has of the Light which he ſees not, though he be ſurrounded by it. God never turns away himſelf from us; but we being turned away from Him, fall into that degree of Blindneſs, as to ſay, that God has withdrawn himſelf from us, and is become our Enemy: Whereas the Change is only in our Selves, and in our own Hearts, by which we are tempted to charge God fooliſhly. Thus the Sinner, by turning away from God, becomes thereby his own Curſe and Tormentor, whilſt God continues unchangeably Juſt and Good in all his Works, *Pſal.* cxlv. 8. However, Man being blinded, and turned away from God, may repreſent Him as an angry, unjuſt and unmerciful Being.

The Deity near to all, but not by all perceived.

How we are to underſtand God's forſaking us, and being angry with us.

§. 3. Hence then we may gather the genuine Senſe of thoſe Places of Scripture, which ſay, that *the Kingdom of God is within us*, and not with-

To confine the Kingdom and Manifeſtation of God to any place is Antichriſtian

without us, as *Luk.* xvii. 21. and that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* v. 12. That *He has nothing to do with them that are without.* Which, without all Diſpute, are not to be underſtood of any external Place, but of the Spirit or inward Man, according to the Faith. For to confine the Kingdom of God to any certain Place, is truly Antichriſtianiſm; who, as our bleſſed Lord has told, will ſay, *Lo here is Chriſt, or lo there,* Matt. xxiv. 23. But if any Place could ſave or condemn a Man, then *Lucifer* himſelf could never have fallen from the Regions of Bliſs; nor would *Adam* ever have ſinned in the Garden of *Eden.* So likewiſe, if any Place would condemn a Man, then ſhould no Man living be ſaved; ſince this whole World lyeth in Darkneſs, and all the Inhabitants thereof are under the Dominion of the Devil, who is the Prince and Ruler of it. He therefore that hath Faith, tho' with *Jonah,* he were in the Depths of the Sea, yet he would be in the Kingdom of God; and he that hath it not, though he have the uppermoſt Seat in the Synagogue, hear Sermons, and join in all the viſible Acts of Communion, yet in the Sight of God he is *without,* and has no Part or Title in the Kingdom of God.

A ſhort Prayer.

O *Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who art the very Way, the true Light, and only Gate of Heaven, I praiſe Thee from the very bottom of my Heart, that by this Meditation, Thou teacheſt me how I am in Thee, and Thou in me, in whatſoever Place I am: How Thou, my true and only High Prieſt, art with me, and delivereſt me from my Sins, whenſoever I lift up my Heart to Thee. Though I walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me. Teach me, O Lord, always to acknowledge this, and not after the manner of this ungrateful World, to undervalue or*

deſpiſe

deſpiſe this hidden Treaſure; but that I may in the true Faith ſeek it, find it, taſt it, and enjoy it. Amen.

CHAP. XXIV.

That the true Worſhipper is not confined to any certain *Time*, but may at any Time call upon God, if he be not himſelf in Fault.

ISA. xlix. 8. lv. 6.

Behold, now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation. Seek the Lord whilſt he may be found, call upon him whilſt he is near.

§. 1. FROM what hath been already ſpoken concerning Place, and what we are now obſerving further upon that Head, it is plain, that he is truly Happy that is in the Kingdom of God. The Reaſon of which is, becauſe he hath his Treaſure within him, whereſoever he is: And that he, who, through Unbelief, is not in the Kingdom of God, is truly a Stranger and Foreigner, however he may go to Church, hear Sermons, receive the Sacrament, and maintain a viſible Communion with other Chriſtians. For a Place, as I ſaid before, will neither ſave us, nor condemn us; that can be done by nothing but *Faith*, or *the want of it*, which being rooted in the Heart of Man, is perfected in the Spirit. The true Chriſtian, in whatever Place he lives, as he has the Spirit of

True divine Worſhip confined to no Time.

Happiness not confined to any Place; the good Christian is always happy.

Christ within him, has also, by consequence, a Principle of Grace, Pardon, and remission of Sins. I speak not this to discourage the external Exercise of Preaching, or the Use of the Ordinances; but for the Comfort of all sincere Souls under Necessities, Sickness, or Banishment; when they are assured that they are truly in Christ, and Christ in them.

He that is without Christ, is out of the Church, and has no Title to Blessing.

§. 2. This also may affright the Sinner, who though living amongst Christians, yet, in the Sight of God, is no Member of the Christian Church. For every Unbeliever cuts himself off from the Body of Christ, and the most valuable Privileges of his Communion. So that a wicked Man, under the Agonies of Sickness, would receive no benefit by having the holy Sacrament, the Priest, nor even the Pope himself standing by him, or by being brought and laid in the midst of the Church. But if a Man has in him a true and living Faith, it could do him no harm, though he should die in an Heathen Country, or in the bottom of the Sea, without the Comfort of the holy Sacrament, or the Assistance of a spiritual Guide; because *Jesus Christ*, the true High Priest, and even the Kingdom of God is in him; as our blessed Lord abundantly testifies, *Joh.* iv. 21. *Luk.* xvii. 21. *Matt.* xxiv. 23. How blind then and miserable are those Men, who seek for Blessedness from Man, confining it to a certain Place, and some external and ritual Observations! which indeed is the Case of the greater Part of Mankind at present, who by that Means forfeit and lose that divine Treasure which every Man carries in himself.

How we are to regard Externals.

§. 3. Externals are nothing else but *Means*, which though not to be despised, yet are not to be valued as the *End* it self, to which they are intended. The Holy Spirit is the great Trea-

Treaſure of Man, who will beſtow himſelf, without the Uſe of Means, where they cannot be had. And we come together in the Church, that by our joint Confeſſions of the divine Preſence, and the united Fervour of brotherly Devotions, we may encourage one another, may call upon God to avert any publick Evils and Calamities, and exerciſe one another in divine Matters; that we (who are otherwiſe ſtark-blind in ſpiritual Things,) being excited by theſe means, may at length underſtand and ſee, that *God is not contained in the Heaven of Heavens*, 1 King. viii. 27. nor confined to any Place; being, as *Job* witneſſeth, Chap. xi. 8. *Higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell*, wider than the Earth, and longer than the Sea.

§. 4. What we have already obſerved of Place, may be alſo very properly applied to *Time*, to which the eternal and unchangeable God is by no means confined, ſo as not to be always at liberty to hear our Prayers. The great Men and Princes of this World, are not always to be ſpoke with, and frequently refuſe admittance to their Petitioners; being engaged either by the Neceſſities or Diverſions of Life. But our God cannot be thus ſeparated from his Creatures; at one view, He ſees, and hears, and conſiders all Things that are done upon the Earth, and *underſtandeth our* ſecret *Thoughts long before* they are brought into effects, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 1. *He numbreth the very Hairs of our Heads*, Matt. x. 30. And *a thouſand Years in his ſight are but as one Day*, Pſal. xc. 5. God is not capable of Alteration or Change, confined to no Time, limited by no Place, always ready to hear and to help us, yea, is continually *ſtanding at the Door, and knocking, that we may open to him*, Rev. iii. 20. So that he is always ready, but we are not. Whereas if we

There is neither Time nor Place with God;

God is hence always ready to hear us:

would conſtantly and without ceaſing wait for Him, we ſhould never fail of a ready Anſwer to all our Prayers.

The End of ſet Times for Prayer.

§. 5. But alas! the Concerns of this lower World have ſo great an influence upon our Minds, diſtracting our Thoughts, and diſturbing our moſt devout Retirements; that we muſt endeavour to purifie our Minds from all Thoughts of the Creature, according to the Advice of *the German Divinity*, which adviſes us, Chap. XXX. *To lay aſide all Thoughts of this or that Thing, Time, or Place, and ſettle all the Powers of our Souls in a profound Quiet, before we begin to pray.* And in this *Sabbath* or *Reſt* of the Soul, in this quiet Ceſſation from the Cares and Labours of corrupt Nature, God deſcends with his living *Word*, and the Soul of Man perceives and taſts the *Truth* and Love of God, of which, before this *patient* Preparation, it was wholly ignorant and inſenſible. So that it cannot forbear crying out in the Words of God himſelf, *Exod.* xxxiv. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, abundant in Goodneſs and Truth*, now at laſt, I find thy preventing Grace helping my Infirmities, and aſſiſting me to pray as I ought.

How we are to prepare our ſelves for it.

The Sabbath *of the Soul.*

The Concluſion which we ought hence to draw.

§. 6. Upon this then thou wilt be amazed and confounded at the extreme Blindneſs of thy own Heart, which gave thee ſo imperfect a Notion of God, as to believe that God was to be perſwaded with external Ceremonies, and clamorous Prayers, and that he ſtood in need of a long and tedious Relation of thy Wants and Neceſſities, whereas He ſees to the very Bottom of thy Soul, and *underſtandeth all thy Thoughts long before* thou wert made, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 2.

AL-

A Prayer for the lively Knowledge of God.

ALmighty, Eternal, and moſt merciful God and Father! Thy Goodneſs and Truth are higher than the Heavens, deeper than the Sea, wider than the Earth; all Places are to Thee the ſame, and in thy Sight all Times are alike. Thou art above all Places, and all Times, and yet doſt penetrate and fill all Things; Thou art nearer to me than I am to my ſelf; Thou preventeſt me with thy Grace, and embraceſt me with thy Mercy, which, thro' my Blindneſs and Miſery, I could neither know nor hope for. Grant that by thy Holy Spirit, I may ſeriouſly lay theſe Things to Heart, and for the future, look up to Thee as my merciful Saviour, who knoweſt all Things, and art preſent at all Times, and in all Places, that I may no more preſume to judge of Thee by any natural Blindneſs, and no more perſuade my ſelf that Thou art to be awakened, or prevailed upon by my Crying, that Thou needeſt any long Diſcourſes of mine, or requireſt any certain Time for Prayer. But give me Grace to conſider, that the true Worſhippers may have acceſs to Thee at all Times, and in all Places, and that thy Goodneſs is always, and every where preſent with us; but that no Man can enjoy it, or taſt of thy Sweetneſs, unleſs he be firſt kindled and enflamed by thy celeſtial Fire to the Exerciſe of devout Prayer. Which that I may worthily and effectually perform, give me thy Holy Spirit, who may work in me to will and to do according to thy good Pleaſure. Amen.

CHAP. XXV.

Certain neceſſary Advices and Inſtructions drawn from the preceding Chapters, exciting the Soul to diligent Prayer.

ISA. lxv. 24.

And it ſhall come to paſs, that before they call, I will anſwer, and whiles they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear.

1. *That God knows all things before we pray.*

§. 1. THE *firſt* Conſideration ariſing from hence is, that God hath not commanded us to pray for his own ſake, becauſe He knoweth all Things; but that we being excited by theſe means, may come to underſtand that He really does know all Things. For God has ſo tender a Concern for us, that He ſeems not to know any thing, till we reflect within our ſelves, that He does indeed know it. Hence it comes to paſs, that when Men pray with indifference, God regards it accordingly. And, on the contrary, ſo ſoon as our Hearts are warmed with divine Fervour, we immediately feel within our Selves, that God knoweth all our Neceſſities, and hath numbred the very Hairs of our Heads before we were born. Theſe are Thoughts that cannot enter into the Hearts of thoſe who deſpiſe and contemn the Duty of Prayer.

2. *God doth not need any tedious Stories of our Neceſſities.*

§. 2. *Secondly*, We need not apply our Selves to God, as we do one to another, with a long Story of our Wants; all that we have to do, is daily to exerciſe our Selves, by an inward introverſion into the Kingdom of God. §

§. 3. *Thirdly*, That God is a thousand Times more ready to give, than we are to receive by Faith and Prayer, as *Tauler* tells us. 3. *God is ready to give.*

§. 4. *Fourthly*, That God stands in no need of any external Ceremonies of ours, our Watchings, Fastings, or Cryings, to awaken Him, who *neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*, Psal cxxi. 4. That He not only foreknows our Desires and Prayers, but even our Existence, *Jer.* i. 5. but on the other Hand, that the Dulness and Stupidity of Men may, by these Exercises, be excited, encouraged, and instructed to consider and understand the tender Mercies of God towards all Mankind. 4. *Doth not need to be awakened by any external Acts, or Services.*

§. 5. *Fifthly*, Hence we discover the Goodness, Truth, and Loving-kindness of God towards all Men; and on the other Hand, the Blindness, Unbelief, the Stupidity and unspeakable Dulness of Mankind towards God, who have so great a Contempt of the Mercies of God, and are so backward in their Prayers and Endeavours to obtain it. 5. *The compassionate Nature of the Godhead.*

§. 6. *Sixthly*, That God is righteous in all his Works, and is so far from being the Author of our Misery, Blindness, and Ignorance, that we are indeed the Cause of it our Selves; whilst in Contempt of his Commands, we neglect to implore his Mercies, and beg the Blessings which He has promised to bestow on all that ask Him. Which is sufficient to vindicate the Justice of God in all his Dealings towards us, and to lay the Blame of all our Sins and Punishments upon our Selves, who are indeed the Authors of both. 6. *We must be sure to justifie God in all his Dealings with Men.*

§. 7. *Seventhly*, That God is not confined to any certain Time or Place, but desires to be worshipped *at all Times*, and *in all Places*, in Spirit and in Truth, *Joh.* iv. 21. 7. *And to acknowledge and adore Him as Omnipresent.*

Miſtakes about Prayer, hereby to be rectified.

The aforegoing Obſervations, when throughly weighed and conſidered, will rectifie abundance of Miſtakes, and open a Man's Eyes to diſcover ſuch things, as he would otherwiſe have been ignorant of. But tho' it is a ſcandalous Thing for a Chriſtian to be ignorant of theſe Maters, yet it is much more ſo to know, and not to reduce them to practice.

AWaken us, O God, that we may Watch; draw us to Thee, and we will run the ſtraight Way, through JESUS CHRIST *our Lord.* Amen.

CHAP. XXVI.

That PRAYER is the Sign and Property of a true Chriſtian.

PSAL. lxxxvi. 1.

Bow down thine Ear, O Lord, to hear me: for I am Poor, and in Miſery.

Obſervations on the Grounds and Reaſons of Prayer.

§. 1. THESE Words give us an admirable Account of the Grounds and Reaſons of Prayer, that it is quickened by Affliction and a Senſe of Miſery, and is an Argument of a true Chriſtian.

The firſt Ground is the Anointing with the Holy Spirit.

§ 2. For, *Firſt*, every Chriſtian is anointed and baptized with the Holy Spirit, 1 *Joh.* ii. 20. which Spirit, when it is not reſiſted nor grieved, but obeyed, is continually groaning in the Heart of Man, raiſing and exalting the devout Soul from Earth to Heaven. For as

as any spirituous Liquor draws out the Strength and Virtue of Herbs and Flowers infused therein: So Man, who is the Flower of God, planted by the Lord himself, *A Plant in the House of God*, Isa. lxi. 3. *Psal.* xcii. 14. must receive the Sprinkling or Baptism of the Holy Spirit, that his Odour and sweet Smell may therewith ascend up unto God.

The 2d. Devout Sighs and Ejaculations from the Operation of this Spirit in us.

§. 3. Whosoever will faithfully attend to the Workings of the Holy Spirit, and not stifle his Operations, will easily be convinced of the Truth of these Observations, he will ever now and then perceive a devout Sigh springing up from his Heart, and breaking forth into these or the like Words: *Good God, Holy Father, have mercy upon me!* As Myrrhe, Frankincense, or other sweet Perfumes, by being thrown upon burning Coals, send forth a Smoak, and delicious Fragrancy, which they would not do without the Help of Fire: So whenever the Fire of the Holy Spirit toucheth our Hearts, and is not extinguished, there immediately arises a most fragrant Perfume of affectionate Sighs and Prayers. And these are *the golden Vials of the Holy Angels*, Rev. v. 8. These are the holy Incense with which they perfume even Heaven it self. Whence it appears, that devout Sighs and Prayers are the truest Sign or Mark of the Holy Spirit in the Heart of Man.

The truest Sign of the Holy Spirit in Man.

The 3d. The Christian's Heart made the Temple of the Holy Ghost.

§. 4. The Soul of Man is also called the Temple, or Habitation of the Holy Ghost; and what more likely to be heard there, than the Prayers and Groanings of its Divine Inhabitant, who is emphatically called, *the Spirit of Grace and Supplication*? (Zech. xii. 10.) so that Prayer, when it proceeds from the very Bottom of the Heart, is a certain Sign of the Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit. I speak not

not here of the Prayers of Hypocrites, of whom God ſpeaketh by the Mouth of his Prophet, ſaying: *Iſa.* xxix. 13. *This People draweth nigh unto me with their Mouth, but their Heart is far from me.* But the true Prayer, which is the Operation of the Holy Spirit, ariſes from the Depth and Bottom of the Soul, like plentiful Springs of Water, which the deeper you dig for, the higher you may raiſe them. Chriſt is the moſt pure and plentiful Fountain of Salvation. *He therefore that thirſteth, let him come and drink,* Iſa. lv. 1. His Spring is very deep, *viz.* his eternal Divinity. *Whoſoever believeth in him, out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water,* Joh. vii. 38. i. e. Prayers and the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.

The 4th. *The Language and Worſhip within this Temple.*

§. 5. This is confirmed by the Office of the Holy Spirit, which is, to *teach and to comfort,* Joh. xvi. 13. neither of which he can do, unleſs He ſpeak; and that He cannot do, without a Temple to ſpeak in. And this Temple is the Heart of Man; and his Language is the devout Aſpirations of thoſe pious Souls in which He operates. A Language indeed Divine and Spiritual, perceived only in the Ground of our Heart. For *this Spirit beareth witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Sons of God, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,* Rom. viii. 15, 16. Man alſo cannot receive Comfort, unleſs his Heart, by being *broken and contrite,* be made *capable* of Conſolation, *Pſal.* li. 19. This is a very ſignificant Metaphor taken from Humane Bodies. For when the Arm, or any other Part, is diſlocated, broken, or bruiſed by ſome accidental Violence, what Pleaſure does the broken and bruiſed Part feel, by being mollified with ſome proper Ointments? How does it pacifie the throbbing Pains of the diſtempered Limb, and as it were, lull it into a ſoft Indolence:

dolence: So when the Heart is wounded with Affliction and Sorrow, is broken and bruiſed with a lively Senſe of its Miſery, then does this Holy Spirit ſhew it ſelf truly a Comforter, ſhedding forth the Oil of Heavenly Conſolation into our afflicted Breaſts. For *He healeth thoſe that are broken in Heart, and giveth them Medicine to heal their Sickneſs*, Pſal. cxlvii. 3. *Heal me, O Lord*, (ſaith *Jeremy*, ch. xvii. 14.) *and I ſhall be healed; ſave me, and I ſhall be ſaved: For Thou art my praiſe.*

When the H. Spirit does beſt perform his Office of Comforter.

§. 6. Hence then we may learn the Advantage of Afflictions, and the *Benefit of the Croſs*, in that our Bleſſed Lord has told us, *Matt.* ix. 12. That *they that are whole have no need of a Phyſician, but they that are Sick. Come therefore, Thou Divine Phyſician of Souls; for we have all need of Thee! Bow down thine Ear, O Lord, and hear me: for I am Poor and in Miſery*, Pſal. lxx. 6. *Poor in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* So great is the Poverty of Man, that unleſs he be covered with the Mercy of God, and cloathed with the Righteouſneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt*, he muſt appear with Shame and Nakedneſs before the Judgment of God and all his Holy Angels; and in this reſpect, Man is by Nature reduced ſo very low, that there is hardly a poorer Creature in the World than Man. And we may apply to almoſt every Man, what was ſpoken to the Church of *Laodicea*, Rev. xiii. 7. *Thou knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

The 5th. The Benefit of the Croſs for the Quickening of Prayer.

The Conſideration of our own Poverty and Neceſſity.

§. 7. Moreover, the Miſery which the Pſalmiſt complains of, is the Effect of Poverty. For he that is poor, may eaſily be conceived to be miſerable. He is certainly ſo, who is forſaken by all, has none to help him, wanders about, having neither Houſe nor Home, nor

And of the Effects thereof.

nor a Place to lay his Head in. And now, what more wretched State can we conceive, than that of Man by Nature? He has not where to reſt himſelf, and knows not whither to fly for Refuge! *If in this Life only we had hope in Chriſt, we were of all Men* (I might add, of all Creatures) *moſt miſerable*, ſaith St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. xv. 19. Let us then acknowledge our Poverty and Spiritual Miſery in this Life, and forthwith we ſhall receive the Inſtructions and Conſolations of the Holy Spirit. He will teach us in our Poverty, to ſigh earneſtly after the Riches of the Divine Grace and Mercy; and in our ſpiritual Miſery and Baniſhment, to lift up our Eyes to God that dwelleth in the Heavens. For our Bleſſed Lord has aſſured us, that *in his Father's Houſe are many Manſions*. And the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxvii. 10. That *when our Fathers and Mothers forſake us, the Lord taketh us up*. Come then, ye that are in Want and Baniſhment, think upon your Heavenly Country. Ye that are poor, naked, and deſtitute, remember that the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is your Cloathing, and *the Garment of Salvation*, Iſa. lxi. 10. and take care to preſerve this Cloathing, *leſt ye walk naked, and Men ſee your Shame*, Rev. xvi. 15.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of the Benefit, Advantage, and Power of Prayers, and the Reaſon on which they ought to be founded.

HEB. iv. 16.

Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of need.

The Grace of God, through Chriſt, is the Foundation of our Prayers.

HEAR *my Voice according to thy Loving-kindneſs, O Lord,* ſaith *David,* Pſal. cxix. 149. pointing out thereby the Foundation of our Prayer, namely, *the Grace and Favour of God*; and this is conveyed down to us through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is *full of Grace and Truth, and of whoſe Fulneſs we ought all to receive*, Joh. i. 16. for which reaſon He is alſo called, the *Throne of Grace*, upon which the Eye of Faith in Prayer ought continually to be fixed, according to the Example of the Children of *Iſrael*, who always offered up their Prayers with their Faces towards the Mercy-Seat. For in his Name, and for his ſake alone it is, that God has promiſed to hear our Prayers, *Joh.* xvi. 23. which even the holy Prophets of old acknowledged as well as we. Thus we find *Daniel* praying, *Dan.* ix. 17. *O our God, hear the Prayer of thy Servant, for the Lord's ſake.*

The Grace of God is our inward Life.

§. 2. *Firſt*, The Benefit of our Prayers is well expreſſed by the Royal Prophet in the latter Part of the aforementioned Verſe: *According to thy Judgments, quicken Thou me.* For our true Life procedeth from the *Grace* of God, which

which whoſoever wants, though he have a Name to live, yet is he ſpiritually Dead, and ſubject to the eternal Wrath of God. For what is our Life without the Divine Grace? Therefore, ſays the holy Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* lxiii. 4. *Thy Loving-kindneſs is better than Life it ſelf.* And this quickening Virtue is derived down to us through *Chriſt Jeſus.* It was for this purpoſe that He took our Fleſh and Blood, that by the quickening Virtue of his Body, we alſo might be quickened. And this we receive only by the Means of Prayer, which draws down a quickening and enlivening Power into our Souls, to heal all our ſpiritual Infirmities, like that which flowed from his Body whilſt on Earth, to cure and heal the Diſeaſes and Diſtempers of all thoſe that touched him, *Luk.* vi. 19. Thus when our Souls are afflicted and ſorrowful, and can lay hold on *Jeſus Chriſt* by the Prayer of Faith, we immediately find as it were new Life and Vigour flowing into our Souls from that inexhauſtible Fountain of Divine Grace. This may be atteſted by the Experience of every languiſhing and afflicted Soul, that has but made uſe of the proper Means.

The Cauſe of the Incarnation.

How the Power of Chriſt is derived to us.

No Comfort without Prayer.

§. 3. From whence we may learn, (1.) That an afflicted Soul cannot be refreſhed or comforted without Prayer, as appears from the Example of CHRIST, in the Hiſtory of his Paſſion, *Matt.* xxvi. 39. who has himſelf alſo for that Reaſon given us a Form of Prayer, *Matt.* vi. 9. And we have indeed great Reaſon to be thankful to God, who has given us a Prayer to be as an univerſal Remedy to all afflicted Souls. (2.) Where the Prophet ſays, *Pſal.* cxix. 149. *Hear me according to thy Mercy*; he ſhews us, that Prayer is the proper Means of obtaining Mercy, and the Graces of the Holy Spirit; ſuch as the increaſe of Faith, Charity,

The Gifts and Graces of God, obtained by Prayer

Charity, Patience, the Knowledge of God, Devotion, inward Peace and Joy. These are such Gifts, such Graces, such heavenly Treasures, as are preferrable to all the World, yea, to Heaven it self. Moreover, from hence we get Strength and Victory against the World, the Devil, and all our Enemies. Which spiritual Strength consists only in Prayer; that was the Power by which *David* and all the Holy Worthies of Old conquered their Enemies; as appears by the Example of *Moses*, *Elias*, *Jehoshaphat*, and others, who always prevailed by Faith and Prayer. (3.) Every Man has need of Prayer in respect of his Office, Condition, and Employment, in which no Man can act either prudently or successfully without it. We are indeed in this miserable World, like People sailing amidst Rocks and Quick-sands, and exposed to innumerable Dangers; for which Reason we ought the more fervently to implore the Guidance and Protection of the Holy Spirit. *The Necessity of Prayer.*

§. 4. Therefore holy *David* adds, Psal. cxix. 150. *They draw nigh, that of Malice persecute me; and are far from thy Law.* And this is a proper Season for Prayer. For what the Devil cannot do himself, he leaves to be accomplished by wicked Men, who are as so many Executioners of his Malice, and who make it their continual Employment to disturb and injure good Men. From these no Man is secure; but the most effectual Help is Prayer. Thus, *Psal.* xviii. 2. *I will call upon the Lord which is worthy to be praised, so shall I be safe from mine Enemies.* And *Psal.* xxv. 1, 2. *Unto Thee, O Lord, will I lift up my Soul. My God, I have put my Trust in Thee, O let me not be confounded, neither let mine Enemies triumph over me. For all they that hope in Thee shall not be ashamed; but such as transgress* *Persecution a proper Ground for Prayer.* *Protection under it by Prayer.*

transgreſs without a Cauſe ſhall be put to confuſion.

A great Encouragement for continuing in Prayer.

§. 5. It is alſo obſervable, that *David* ſays, his Enemies are far from the Law of God. Such are all they that perſecute others, forſaking the Word of God, and being far from his Fear; from whence it follows, that as they are far from God, ſo God is far from them, and ſo nothing but ruine and deſtruction hangs over their Heads. Whilſt, on the other Hand, the faithful, pious, and devout Soul, is continually more and more united to God by Prayer.

An admirable Advantage of Prayer.

§. 6. When therefore we are daily lifting up our Hearts to God, and learn to converſe familiarly with Him, we approach continually nearer and nearer to Him, and by degrees, forgetting this lower World, from Earthly, we become Heavenly and Spiritual; like *Moſes*, who when he had converſed forty Days and forty Nights with God, his Face ſhone like the Beams of the Sun, *Exod.* xxxiv. 29. For as we eaſily learn the Cuſtoms and Manners of thoſe with whom we converſe, and are not ſo well pleaſed with any Company as that which we are uſed to: So by continual and daily Prayer, we grow daily more and more acquainted with the Manners and Language of our heavenly Country, and are more and more inflamed with divine Love. Moreover, Prayer is a kind of divine Charm or Preſervative againſt Sins, Temptations, and all kinds of Evils; according to that Saying of *Chriſt*, *Matt.* xxvi. 41. *Watch and Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.* But if even then, any thing befal us, we know that it falls upon us by the immediate Permiſſion of God, which, with all due Submiſſion and Reſignation to his Will, we may lawfully pray to be delivered from.

§. 7.

§. 7. 2*dly*, The Prophet goes on, *Pſal.* cxix. 151. *Be thou nigh at hand, O Lord: for all thy Commandments are true.* In which Words, *David* aſſures us, that the ſecond Foundation of Prayer, is the Preſence and Truth of God. And indeed, how great ſoever our Calamities may be, there is no one Conſideration that gives us ſo much eaſe and comfort, as that of the Preſence of God with us. According to that of *Iſai.* xli. 10. *Fear thou not, for I am with Thee: be not diſmayed, for I am thy God.* Upon which account, we may with aſſurance call upon Him in all Places, and upon all Occaſions. For though our Saviour tells us, *Mat.* vi. 6. *Thou when thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet, and ſhut thy Door, and pray to thy Father which is in Secret; and thy Father which ſeeth in Secret, ſhall reward thee openly.* Yet we muſt conſider, that theſe Words were ſpoken againſt the Hypocrites of thoſe Times, who, out of a vain Oſtentation, uſed to pray Standing in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Street; but are by no means, an obligation to any Man to pray in any one particular Place.

The divine Preſence is the 2d Foundation of Prayer.

§. 8. So we read of the Patriarch *Iſaac*, Gen. xxiv. 63. that he went out about the Evening into the *Field* to *meditate*. And it is plain from *Luk.* vi. 12. That *our Bleſſed Lord went alone into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to God.* We may therefore in all Places, and at any Time, pray to God, but more eſpecially when we are alone, and not diverted by the Converſation of others. Let us continually ſtir up our Selves to this divine Converſation with God, remembring the Words of the Pſalmiſt, *Thou art nigh at hand, O Lord.* And if this be true, as moſt certainly it is, we cannot do better than to be often con-

Whence a divine Converſation may be maintained in any Place.

converſing with Him; according to that of *Iſai.* lv. 6. *Call upon him whilſt he is near*; and *Pſal.* cxlv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him.*

The Truth of God is the 3d Foundation of Prayer.

§. 9. 3*dly*, Moreover, the *Veracity* of God is a ſtrong Obligation upon us to pray, becauſe we know, (1.) That He has commanded it; *Pſal.* l. 15. *Call upon me.* (2.) Has promiſed to hear it; *Iſa.* lxv. 24. *Before they call, I will anſwer; whilſt they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear.* That He has not only promiſed to hear, but (3.) has actually heard the Prayers of the Faithful. He has therefore commanded, He has promiſed, and He has performed. This is plain from the Examples of *Moſes*, *David*, *Samuel*, *Joſhua*, and *Cornelius* in the Acts, *whoſe Prayers and Alms aſcended up for a Memorial before God*, Acts x. 4. Not to mention abundance of other Examples to be found in holy Scriptures. And that thou mayeſt not think, that becauſe thou art not ſuch a one as *Moſes*, *David*, *Elias*, or *Joſhua*, that therefore thou ſhalt not be heard as eaſily as they were, thou muſt conſider, that they all *were Men ſubject to like Paſſions as we are*; ſo St. *James* tells us, Chap. v. 17.

Comfort in Prayer.

§. 10. And what was *Cornelius*? He was a Heathen. What was *Manaſſes?* A moſt grievous Sinner. God has promiſed that He will hear the Miſerable; as *Pſal.* xxxiv. 7. *This poor Man called, and the Lord heard him.* And *Pſal.* cii. 18. *He turneth him to the Prayer of the poor Deſtitute, and deſpiſeth not their deſire.* Pſal. ix. 19. *The patient abiding of the Meek ſhall not periſh for ever.*

The Eternal Word is the 4th Foundation of our Prayers.

§. 11. But as the Pſalmiſt adds: *As concerning thy Commandments, I have known long ſince, that thou haſt grounded them for ever*, Pſal. cxix. 152. that does exceedingly encourage our Prayers,

Prayers, and ſtrengthen our Faith, and is the *Fourth* and immoveable Foundation of Prayer. The *Word* and Promiſe of God are built upon an eternal Foundation, being indeed nothing elſe but God himſelf, and his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, in Him, the Word of God, and the Happineſs of Man, were founded *before the Foundations of the World were laid*, Eph. i. 4. And whatſoever is built upon an eternal Baſis, cannot by any temporary Accident be ſhaken or overturned. 'Twas this St. *Paul* had in his Eye, when he tells us, *Rom.* viii. 38. *That neither Heighth, nor Depth, nor Things preſent, nor Things to come, nor Angels, nor Principalities, can be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God.*

§. 12. And now what greater Conſolation can we wiſh? Or who can chooſe but triumph, when he conſiders, that our Faith and Prayer are founded upon a Principle that is Eternal? Hence it is ſaid, *Iſa.* xxviii. 16. *Behold, I lay in Sion for a Foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a ſure Foundation: he that believeth ſhall not make haſt*; Or as St. *Peter* explains it, 1 *Epiſt.* ii. 6. *ſhall not be confounded.* And St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. iii. 11. *Other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.* And again, 2 *Tim.* ii. 19. *The Foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth thoſe that are his.* And againſt this Foundation, even the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail. This, in ſhort, is the Strength and Security of our Salvation, our Faith and Bleſſedneſs, which ſhall laſt when Heaven and Earth ſhall be no more. *The Effect this ought to have upon us.*

§. 13. For PRAYER is

A Converſing with God.
The Key of Heaven.
The Flower of Paradiſe.
A free Acceſs to God.
A Familiarity with God.
The Searcher of His Secrets.
The Opener of His Myſteries.
The Purchaſer of His Gifts.
A ſpiritual Banquet.
A Heavenly Enjoyment.
The Honey-Comb of the Spirit.
Honey flowing from the Lips.
The Nurſe of Virtues.
The Conqueror of Vices.
An Atonement for Guilt.
The Medicine of the Soul.
A Remedy againſt Infirmities.
An Antidote againſt Sin.
The Pillar of the World.
The Salve of Mankind.
The Seed of Bleſſing.
The Garden of Happineſs.
The Tree of Pleaſure.
The Encreaſe of Faith.
The Support of Hope.
The Mother of Charity.
The Path of Righteouſneſs.
The Preſerver of Perſeverance.
The Mirrour of Prudence.
The Miſtreſs of Temperance.
The Srength of Chaſtity.
The Beauty of Holineſs.
The Fire of Devotion.
The Light of Knowledge.
The Repoſitory of Wiſdom.
The Strength of the Soul.

The Remedy againſt Faint-heartedneſs.
The Foundation of Peace.
The Joy of the Heart.
The Jubilee of the Mind.
A faithful Companion in this earthly Pilgrimage.
The Shield of a Chriſtian Soldier.
The Rule of Humility.
The Forerunner of Honour.
The Nurſe of Patience.
The Guardian of Obedience.
The Fountain of Quietneſs.
The Imitator of Angels.
The Conqueſt of Devils.
The Comfort of the Sorrowful.
The Triumph of the Juſt.
The Joy of the Saints.
The Helper of the Oppreſſed.
The Eaſe of the Afflicted.
The Reſt of the Weary.
The Ornament of the Conſcience.
The Advancement of Graces.
The Odour of an acceptable Sacrifice.
The Encourager of mutual Good-will.
The Refreſhment of this miſerable Life.
The Sweetning of Death.
The Foretaſt of the Heavenly Life.
The earneſt Deſire of Everlaſting Salvation

CHAP. XXVIII.

The Reaſons why God certainly hears our PRAYERS.

PSAL. lxxxvi. 5, 6, 7.

For thou Lord art Good and Gracious, and of great Mercy to all that call upon Thee. Give ear, Lord, to my Prayers; and ponder the Voice of my humble Deſires. In the Time of my Trouble I will call upon Thee, for thou heareſt me.

The Reaſon we have to hope that God hears us.

§. 1. THUS ſaith the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Lam. iii. 22. *'Tis of the Lord's Mercy that we are not conſumed; becauſe his Compaſſions fail not. They are new every Morning, Great is thy Faithfulneſs. The Lord is my Portion, ſaith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him.*

The Ground of Conſolation in Affliction.

§. 2. In theſe Words, the Holy Spirit gives us ſtrong Conſolation in our Afflictions, by an Argument drawn from the Goodneſs and Loving-kindneſs of God; without which, we ſhould immediately be conſumed. For as in the natural World, Light and Darkneſs, by the Appointment of God, alternately ſucceed each other; ſo do Light and Darkneſs, Joy and Sorrow, in the ſpiritual World. Hence there is a Neceſſity that the *Light ſhould ſpring up after Darkneſs, and Joy after Sorrow*, in the Souls of the Righteous; as it is ſaid, *Pſal.* xcvii. 11. For both our Being, and our Well-being, depend entirely upon the Loving-kindneſs of God. *For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being*, Acts xvii. 28. He is the never-

never-failing Fountain and Spring of Life and Happineſs. His Works teſtifie this, for by the Effects we certainly judge of the Cauſe. Seeing therefore, that God is the Maker and Creator of all Things that have Life, it follows, that He is LIFE it ſelf: as He is the Original of Good, it follows, that He himſelf is the Supream GOOD: And as all the Creation conſpires together, in a wonderful Harmony of Love, it follows, that He is LOVE it ſelf.

That God is the chief Good, *and* Love *it ſelf.*

§. 3. For which Reaſon He is alſo called, the *LIVING* GOD, *Matt.* xvi. 16. *Thou art Chriſt, the Son of the Living God*; not only from his Eſſence, as being an original neceſſary Being; but alſo from his Effect, becauſe he giveth and preſerveth Breath, and Life, and Motion to all Things; *Acts* xvii. 25. *Pſal.* civ. 27. *Dan.* v. 23. *Thou haſt praiſed the Gods of Silver and Gold, of Braſs, Iron, Wood, and Stone, which ſee not, nor hear, nor know: And the God in whoſe Hand thy Breath is, and whoſe are all thy Ways, haſt thou not glorified.* Jer ii. 13. *They have forſaken me, the Fountain of living Waters, and hewed out for themſelves broken Ciſterns, that will hold no Water.* Deut. xxx. 20. *The Lord is thy Life, and the Length of thy Days.* Pſal. xxvii. 1. *The Lord is the Strength of my Life.* Whence it follows, that God is in Effect, the Life of every living Creature, and does produce and preſerve Life in all Things flowing from Him, as Heat from the Sun, and extending it ſelf not only to Men, but to the whole Creation of God; according to that of St. *Paul*, Rom. xi. 36. *Of Him, and by Him, and for Him are all Things: to whom be Glory for ever. Amen.* Col. iii. 11. *Chriſt is all, and in all.*

That He is the Life *of every living Creature.*

Three Degrees of Life.

§. 4. Now though all Creatures derive their Life from God; yet Man has received it from his Maker in a more excellent Degree; for as he is endowed with a rational Soul, it follows, that he enjoys a Life more Noble than the reſt of the Creatures. Yet the Life of Angels is more Noble and Glorious than that of Men, becauſe of the Glory and Majeſty of God manifeſting it ſelf more Illuſtriouſly in them. Hence alſo, Angels are called, *The Angels of God's Power*, 2 Theſſ. i. 7. as being free from that Bondage of Corruption to which humane Nature is ſubject. But the moſt noble Life of all, is that of *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, becauſe He is God and *Life* it ſelf; according to that of St. *John*, 1 Epiſt. v. 20. *This is the true God, and eternal Life*; i. e. *He is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.*

1. *The* Human.

2. *The* Angelical.

3. *The* Divine.

As God is the Fountain of Life, *ſo He is of all* Good.

§. 5. And as God is the Fountain and Principle of Life, ſo is He alſo of all Good. For He is the ſupream and eternal GOOD, and whatſoever bears the Marks and Characters of Good, is derived from this Original. Thus, every Creature has received a certain ſmall Portion of the Divine Goodneſs, by which it bears Witneſs of its Maker, and in ſome Manner calls upon Man to do the ſame. Thus, for inſtance, *The Vine* does as it were ſpeak to us in this manner: *Conſider, O Man, that the Sweetneſs of my Juice, with which I chear thy Heart, is the Gift of my Maker.* And ſo the Bread: *That Virtue, O Man, by which I ſatisfie thy Hunger, is beſtowed on me by my Creator and thine.* This is the meaning of that Saying of St. *Auguſtine*: *That God has as it were ſhed ſome Drops of his divine Goodneſs upon all the Creatures, that they might thereby contribute to the Happineſs of Man.*

Every Creature bears hence the Characters of the Divine Bounty.

And

And that of the Psalmist: *Psal.* lxv. 12. *Thou crownest the Year with thy Goodness, and thy Clouds drop Fatness.*

§. 6. Now that which in Nature we call the *Goodness of God*, is by the Scriptures, in a Theological Sense, called *the Grace of God.* This bearing Relation to the Soul, and that to the Body. And as God has by a thousand Ways discovered his Goodness in *the* great *Book of Nature*; so He has in innumerable Instances discovered his Grace and Mercy in *the Book of his Word*; all which are compleated in *Christ*; for He is the great Centre and Repository of all the Treasures of divine Goodness and Love that are scattered over Heaven and Earth. Now as it is the Nature of every *good Being to be communicative, otherwise it ceases to be good.* (For who can tell whether this or that thing be good, unless it discover it self this Way?) So no Man could know whether God be Good and Gracious, unless He had communicated his Grace and Goodness to others. And who could have known the inestimable Benefits of CHRIST a Saviour, if He had not so abundantly manifested his Love towards us?

The Goodness and the Grace of God how distinguish'd, by different Relations.

Communicativeness an essential Property of Grace and Goodness.

All Good is communicated in Christ.

§. 7. Here, if it be asked, why God was pleased to manifest his Goodness, Grace, and Mercy to Mankind? I answer, it was for this Reason; that we might believe in Him, love Him above all things, and call upon Him in all our Adversities; and therefore He was pleased to make this manifestation of himself to be, as it were, the first Motive and Incentive to kindle the Flames of Devotion in our Hearts. *For how should we call on Him, of whom we have not heard?* Rom. x. 14. Let us, in this Case, take Example by *Moses*, who when he begg'd of God that he might behold his Glory, received this answer: *Thou canst not see my Face, for there*

The Ground of our Faith, Charity and Prayer.

there ſhall no Man ſee me, (in my incomprehenſible Eſſence) *and live. Behold, thou ſhalt ſtand upon a Rock, and it ſhall come to paſs, that when my Glory paſſeth by, thou ſhalt ſee my back Parts*; (that is, thou ſhalt know me by my Works,) *but my Face ſhall not be ſeen. And the Lord deſcended in a Cloud, and his Glory paſſed before him*; upon which *Moſes*, full of the Senſe of the Divine Goodneſs, began to cry out and to proclaim: *The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thouſands, forgiving Tranſgreſſion, Iniquity and Sin, and that will by no means clear the Guilty*, Exod. xxxiii. 19, 20, 21. Ch. xxxiv. 6.

How God makes his Goodneſs to paſs before us.

§. 8. Now as Almighty God diſcovered himſelf to *Moſes*, as He paſſed by, and he, upon the Senſe of his Goodneſs, Grace, and Mercy, immediately began to pray; ſo has He, in like manner, manifeſted himſelf to us, and made all his Goodneſs paſs before us, that we alſo might learn to praiſe Him. But you will ſay, How has God manifeſted himſelf to me? If He would ſhew himſelf to me, as He did to *Moſes*; why ſhould I not praiſe Him as he did? To which I anſwer; This is done in *Chriſt Jeſus*, in whom He manifeſted all his Goodneſs after a viſible manner. *For we have ſeen his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*, Joh. i. 14. And did we but ſeriouſly conſider all that our Bleſſed Saviour has done for us, we ſhould doubtleſs with *Moſes*, cry out, *The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and in Truth.* And thus we ſee in what Senſe the Type, which is plainly to be diſcerned in this Story of *Moſes*, was fulfilled by the Incarnation of *CHRIST*. For God deſcending from Heaven

And how, and why, He manifeſts his Glory to us.

in

in Him, was pleased to make his Glory pass before us.

How all the Goodness of God by Christ, came down to us on Earth.

§. 9. When *Paul* and *Barnabas* wrought Miracles at *Athens*, the Heathens cried out, *The Gods are come down to us in the Likeness of Men*, Acts xiv. 11. This was their notion of the Matter; but we may in a very proper Sense say: That all the Goodness and Grace of God did, by *Christ*, come down to us upon Earth, that we thereby might be drawn to God, and that the Spirit of Faith and Prayer might be bestowed on us. For by Prayer only we obtain the Grace and Favour of God.

Arguments that God hears our Prayers.

§. 10. Now let us produce some Arguments to convince us, that God hears our Prayers. And *First*, such is the Power of Prayer, and Entreaty, that it does often pacifie and prevail upon, not only the Compassionate and Kind, but even the most morose and surly Tempers; of which we have an instance in *Luk.* xviii. 5. where the Widow, by her continual Prayers, prevails upon even that unjust Judge, that neither feared God, nor regarded Man. For Prayer, as it proceeds from the Spirit, and is as it were the Strength of the Soul, has a marvellous Power and Influence upon the Minds of others, so as to be able to soften and mould them into any form of Benevolence. Now as God is not a tyrannical Being, but Mercy in the highest Degree, the most tender Loveliness, the most perfect Patience, the most generous Compassion, the most ardent Charity; and in a Word, Goodness it self; so He cannot but be tenderly moved by the ardent and devout Prayers of his Servants. If he should do otherwise, it would follow, that God is not supremely Good, Loving and Merciful. But as it is certain

1. *The Power and natural Efficacy of Prayer.*

A remarkable Foundation for Prayer.

tain that He is all this; ſo it is as certain, that He is eaſie to be entreated by devout and humble Prayer.

Which is confirm'd by the Experience of a moſt deeply exerciſed Soul.

§. 12. Hence *Tauler* tells us, *That God is enflamed with ſo vehement a Love towards us, as if his Divinity it ſelf depended on us, and his only Aim and Deſign was, to diſcover to us the Abyſs of his Divinity, and the Fulneſs of his Eſſence and Nature; and as if his Relation to us were the ſame as to himſelf.* And again, *We were created, and are called and invited to things infinite, great, and eternal; wherefore God is exceedingly provoked at us, when we prefer the empty and trifling Vanities of the World before Him, who is ready, not only to beſtow all things elſe, but even himſelf upon us.* Again. *So great is the Love of God towards us, that He can deny us nothing; yea, He prevents our Prayers, meets us (as it were) half-way, and courts our Friendſhip, being a thouſand Times more ready to give, than we are to receive.*

2. *The Truth of God.*

§. 13. The *Second* Argument is, the Truth and Promiſe of God. *Pſal.* l. 15. *Call upon me in the Day of Trouble, and I will deliver thee.* Pſal. lxxxvi. 5. *Thou, Lord, art Good and Gracious, and of great Mercy to all that call upon Thee.* The Lord, we ſee, is *Good*; and if this be not ſufficient, He is alſo *Gracious* and *Merciful*; and if this do not ſatisfie us, He is alſo *of great Mercy.* But to whom? even *to thoſe that call upon Him.* Hence, *Pſal.* cxlv. 18. it is ſaid, *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, yea, all ſuch as call upon him faithfully: He will fulfil the Deſire of them that fear Him, He alſo will hear their cry, and will help them.* Iſa. lxv. 24. Joh. xvi. 23. Matt. vii. 7, 8. *Ask*, but reſt not there; *ſeek* alſo: neither think this ſufficient, but *knock. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh,*

knocketh, it ſhall be opened. Mar. xi. 24. *All Things whatſoever ye ſhall ask in Prayer, believe that ye receive, and ye ſhall have them.* Compare this with *Luk.* xi. 9. And that God will keep his Promiſe, is as certain, as that He really is what He in his holy Word has declared himſelf to be. And that He may hear us, and pour his abundant Goodneſs upon us, He has commanded us to pray often, to pray earneſtly, and without ceaſing, *Luk.* xviii. 1. 1 *Theſſ.* v. 17.

3. *His Fatherly Affection:*

§. 14. A *third* Argument for our Prayer, is God's paternal Tenderneſs, illuſtrated, *Luk.* xi. 11, 13. *If a Son ſhall ask Bread of any of you that is a Father, will he give him a Stone? If ye therefore being Evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more ſhall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* And is not God this Father, *of whom the whole Family in Heaven and in Earth is named?* Eph. iii. 15. whom St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. i. 3. calls, *The Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort?* Shall Man then be merciful, and ſhall the God that created that merciful Heart, be unmerciful? Shall He that gave to Parents that tender Affection, be without Bowels himſelf? Why ſhould God call himſelf a *Father*, if He be not of a paternal Temper? So that in ſhort, it muſt come to this, either that God is unjuſtly ſtyled *our Father*, or elſe that He will hear the Prayers of his Children that call upon Him. Hence, *Iſa.* lxiii. 16. it is ſaid, *Thou Lord art our Father.* And Jer. xxxi. 9. *I am a Father to Iſrael, and Ephraim is my firſt born.* But if the Affection of a Mother be ſo great, that *ſhe cannot but have compaſſion on the Son of her Womb*, Iſai. xlix 15. Why ſhould we think God ſo void of Mercy? Why ſhould we queſtion

The Mercy of God illuſtrated by the Tenderneſs of Parents.

ſtion God's Compaſſions toward us, if we approach Him with penitent and contrite Hearts? How do the Mother's Bowels yearn over her beloved Son, when ſhe ſees Him labouring under any dangerous Diſtemper? The ſame, the Almighty God ſays of himſelf: *Therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord.*

4. *The Interceſſion of Chriſt.*

§. 15. A *fourth* Argument is, *The Interceſſion of Chriſt.* With what ardent Affection of Prayer did He, in the Time of his Humiliation upon Earth, recommend his Church to his Father, and interceed for all the Faithful? Thus *Joh.* xvii. 1, *&c.* (1.) v. 11. *Holy Father, keep them in thy Name, whom thou haſt given me; that they may be one, even as we are one.* (2.) ver. 17. *Sanctifie them in thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* (3.) ver. 15. *I pray not that thou wouldeſt take them out of the World, but that thou wouldeſt keep them from the Evil of the World.* (4.) ver. 20. *I pray not for them only, but for all thoſe that ſhall believe on me through their Word.* (5.) ver. 24. *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am.* (6.) ver. 26. *I pray that the Love wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* Nor did He pray thus for us only upon Earth; but even now continues his Interceſſions for us at the right Hand of God, *Rom.* viii. 34. *Heb.* iv. 14, 16. Ch. vii. 26. Ch. ix. 11. *Seeing then that we have a great High Prieſt, that is paſſed into the Heavens, Jeſus the Son of God; let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of Need.*

5. *The Teſtimony of the Spirit*

§. 16. A *fifth* Argument is, the Teſtimony of the Holy Spirit, *who beareth witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Sons of God,* Rom. viii.

viii. 16. and this witneſs in our Hearts cannot deceive us. For if this Teſtimony be in us of a Truth, we ſhall have a demonſtrative Evidence that we are God's Children, equal to any Demonſtration whatſoever; and conſequently that He heareth us in Chriſt, when we pray unto Him.

§. 17. *Sixthly*, Becauſe God and Chriſt is in us, and *dwelleth in us by Faith*, how can we ſuppoſe that God will not hear our Sighs and Groans? *Pſal.* cxxxix. 2, 4. *Thou underſtandeſt my Thoughts long before. There is not a Word in my Tongue, but Thou, Lord, knoweſt it altogether.* Think not therefore, that God is ſeparated from thee by any diſtance of Place, which may hinder thy Prayers from coming to Him, *For He is in thee, and thou in Him*, Act. xvii. 28. Joh. xvii. 23. Seeing therefore he liveth and worketh in thee, Why ſhould He not hear thy Prayers? *Pſal.* xxxviii. 10. *Lord, thou knoweſt all my Deſire, and my Groaning is not hid from thee.* Pſal. xix. 15. *Let the Words of my Mouth, and the Meditations of my Heart, be always acceptable in thy Sight.* 6. *The Union of the Spirit.*

§. 18. *Seventhly*, Becauſe the Holy Spirit, who is truly God, is alſo the Spirit of Prayer, and himſelf maketh Interceſſion in us with Sighs and Groans unutterable, *Zech.* xii. 10. *Rom.* viii. 26. Why then ſhouldſt thou imagine that God ſhould not ſee, and hear, and regard, that which He himſelf operates and works in thee? Nay, it is impoſſible, that even the ſmalleſt Sigh, proceeding from the Holy Spirit in us, and tending towards God, can be loſt or come to nought. For as it comes from God, ſo it goes to Him; and whatſoever is in Him cannot *periſh*, Joh. iii. 21. Eccluſ. xvii. 15. *The Ways of Man are ever before God, and ſhall not be hid from his Eyes.* 7. *Prayer the Work of the Spirit.*

§. 19.

8. §. 19. *Eighthly*, God is not forgetful like Men, as *Mal.* iii. 16. *A Book of remembrance is written before Him, for them that fear the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.* So that He cannot be forgetful of our Prayers. God cannot forget our good Deeds, nor call the Sins of the Penitent to remembrance. So mighty, and ſo abundant is the Grace of God, that He blots out our Sins, and calls not our Tranſgreſſions to mind. But the Good which himſelf has wrought in us, He can never forget; for then He ſhould forget himſelf, and his own Works. So that it is impoſſible that God ſhould diſregard thoſe Prayers, which his own Holy Spirit worketh in us; no more than He can forget his Word, or be unmindful of his Promiſe. *Since I ſpake of him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill*, ſaith God by the Prophet, *Jer.* xxxi. 20. And *Pſal.* lvi. 9. He tells us, that *He telleth all our flittings, and puts our Tears into his Bottle.* So *Pſal.* iii. 9. He aſſures us, *That He hath commanded his Covenant for ever.* And what is this *Covenant*? Nothing certainly, but the Remiſſion of our Sins, confirmed to us by the Death of CHRIST, and ſealed by his Holy Spirit, *Eph.* i. 13.

God is not forgetful of Good.

God cannot be unmindful of his own work in us.

An Objection anſwered.

§. 20. And now perhaps you will ſay; if theſe things are ſo, how comes it to paſs that God does not hear and grant my Petitions? I have often prayed, and called, and ſighed, and all to no purpoſe. Thus much indeed muſt be granted, that many a Man prays a great while for that which he does not obtain, and thence we judge, that his Prayers are not heard. What then becomes of all your boaſted Foundations of Prayer? This is a very great Trial, and has given great Diſturbance to many ſincere and well-diſpoſed Souls. But here we muſt obſerve: That the certainty of God's hearing our Prayers,

ers, is inconteſtably proved by the Arguments already produced, which are built upon an immoveable Foundation; whence it appears, that God does as certainly hear our Prayers, as that He is (1.) Merciful, and a lover of Mankind. (2.) That He is True in all his Promiſes, yea, is *Truth* it ſelf. (3.) That He has a Fatherly Tenderneſs for us. (4.) That *Jeſus Chriſt* is our Mediator. (5.) That God and Chriſt dwell in us. Which are Truths ſo certain and evident, that he can ſcarce be a Chriſtian, that queſtions the Truth of them.

How God does always hear us

§. 21. But we complain, that God does not preſently give us what we ask for, and therefore that our Prayers are not heard: For this, Two Reaſons may be given. 1*ſt*, That God hears our Prayers, regarding more our Happineſs than our Deſires. 2*dly*, That He reſerves to himſelf the Liberty of beſtowing the Bleſſings we ask, either upon our Bodies or our Souls, as He ſhall think moſt proper. Thus perhaps, I ask of God ſome temporal Bleſſings, which He ſeeing not to be fit for me, inſtead of them gives me ſpiritual ones; by which means I not only receive what I prayed for, but ſo much more, as the Good of the Soul is to be preferred before that of the Body. For as the Soul is much more noble than the Body, and ſpiritual Bleſſings are more Excellent than earthly; ſo much better and more convenient is it for us, that God ſhould give us his eternal and ſpiritual Bleſſings, than thoſe tranſitory and fading Enjoyments, which we are generally moſt fond of. He hears our Prayers, not always with reſpect to our Bodies, the Loſs of which is not great; but to our Souls, the Salvation of which is the Top and Completion of all Happineſs. If it ſhould pleaſe God to viſit you with ſome bodily Diſtemper, and

Yet not always with reſpect to our Bodies.

you pray for Health; doubt not but your Prayers would be heard, and that you ſhall certainly enjoy, if not the Health of your Body, yet the Health of your Soul, which is much more to be preferred. And every Man in his ſound Senſes muſt think ſo. For what Advantage would it be to have a ſound and healthful Body, and a ſinful diſtempered Soul, liable to eternal Death? But when it is well with the Soul, a Man may ſay with *David*, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon Earth that I deſire in Compariſon of Thee. My Fleſh and my Heart faileth: but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* And with diſtreſſed *Job*, Ch. xix. 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* And from Him the Soul may derive Life. Therefore *David*, Pſal. cxix. 72. comparing ſpiritual Bleſſings with earthly, tells us: *The Law of thy Mouth is dearer unto me than Thouſands of Gold and Silver.*

The Grace of God to be preferred before all earthly Bleſſings.

§. 22. But perhaps you will ſay: That you pray for both, the Health of your Soul as well as of your Body; and ſpiritual Bleſſings as well as temporal. To this the Lord himſelf anſwers thee, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. which was the Anſwer given to St. *Paul*, though he would have been better pleaſed to be anſwered in his own Way. And thus it appears, that God always hears our Prayers, if not with regard to our Bodies, yet certainly to our Souls. Beſides, God has reſerved to himſelf the Liberty of Accompliſhing our Deſires either in this World, or the next, as He ſhall ſee moſt proper. Wherefore if thou doſt not receive the Bleſſings thou prayeſt for, conſider, that it is not convenient for thee to enjoy them here, but that the Anſwer of thy Prayers is reſerved for the other Life, which is

God reſerves the Liberty of accompliſhing our Prayers either in this World or the next.

is more Noble and Durable, and more capable of ſublime Enjoyments than this. There the Lord will beſtow on thee a thouſand-fold, all that He ſeemed to deny thee here. For as He cannot forget our Prayers; ſo He cannot chuſe but anſwer them graciouſly, if not in this Life, yet certainly in that which is to come. As many Prayers as thou offereſt up here, ſo many Bleſſings ſhalt thou receive hereafter. There *we ſhall reap if we faint not*, Gal. vi. 9. Then ſhall the Lord ſay to every Soul, *Behold thy Prayer which thou offeredſt to me. See here is what thou prayedſt for, and a thouſand Times more than thou deſiredſt.* And this Time of Retribution we muſt patiently wait for.

How we muſt diſtinguiſh betwixt Seed-time and Harveſt.

§. 23. He would be a very fooliſh Husbandman, that ſhould expect to reap as ſoon as he had ſowed; and upon this, ſhould cry out with Tears, that he had ſown a great deal of Seed, but could ſee no ſign of Harveſt,! Thou Fool! wait till the Seaſon of Harveſt, and then thou ſhalt receive the Fruits of thy Labour with a bleſſed Improvement. Theſe are the Complaints which abundance of People make: *I have prayed* (ſays one) *ſo often*; *I have ſo often ſighed from the bottom of my Soul*; *but I ſee no hopes of being heard*; *ſo that all my Prayers, and Sighs, and Tears are in vain.* Ah impatient Soul! Thou haſt ſcarce ſowed, and doſt thou already talk of Harveſt! Prithee, wait for the pretious Harveſt of eternal Life, and thou ſhalt reap an abundant Crop of Glory! *For what a Man ſows, that ſhall he reap*, Gal. vi. 7. There thou ſhalt gather with Joy the Fruit of the many Prayers, which, as ſo many pretious Seeds, thou haſt ſown in Tears; as it is, *Pſal.* cxxvi. 5. This is the Word and Promiſe of God, which ſhall certainly be fulfilled, either here, or in the other World.

The Reſurrection of our Bodies, is the ſpiritual Harveſt.

Thus, when thou art taking thy laſt doleful Farewel of a dying Child, Husband, Wife, or Friend, thou muſt conſider, that this is the Seaſon in which the Bodies of thy Friends, and thine own alſo, are as it were to be ſown, and committed to the Earth; but that the Harveſt of the Reſurrection is at Hand, when *the Angels, the Reapers, ſhall gather the Sheaves, and put them into Barns*, Matt. xiii. 30. There we ſhall find that our Prayers, our Sighs and Tears, were not loſt, but only ſent before hand, to be received again with Uſury, finding all Things in God that ever our Souls could conceive or deſire. So then the Promiſes of God, and the Arguments produced to evince them, ſhall ſtand firm and unſhaken in CHRIST JESUS, to be eternally fulfilled in every faithful Soul, to their everlaſting Joy and Salvation, for which we ſhall render eternal Thanks and Praiſe to God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of the Seven Helps to aſſiſt our Infirmities in Prayer.

ROM. viii. 26, 27.

Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our Infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought: but the Spirit it ſelf maketh Interceſſion for us, with ſighs and groans unutterable. And He that ſearcheth the Hearts, knoweth what is the Mind of the Spirit, becauſe He maketh Interceſſion for the Saints according to the Will of God.

§. 1. BEcauſe, alas! our Prayers are very weak and imperfect, let us ſee what Aſſiſtances God has given us in his holy Word, to help us in that Duty.

§. 2. The *firſt* Help is our only *Mediator and Advocate JESUS CHRIST the Son of God*, 1 Joh. ii. 2. He is our Advocate, pleading our Cauſe before God, when we are hardly able to expreſs what we want. Who is therefore called the *LOGOS*, or Word of the Father, becauſe God by Him has diſcovered his Will to us; as He is alſo called *the Mediator*, becauſe He ſollicits our Cauſe before God. A Type of Him we have in *Moſes*, the Mediator of the Old Teſtament, to whom the People, flying from the Face of God in Mount *Sinai*, ſaid, *Exod.* xx. 19. *Speak thou with us.* Alſo *Exod.* iv. 10, 11, 12. Where, when *Moſes* complained that he was of a ſlow Speech, and a ſlow Tongue, that ſo he might avoid

1. *Firſt Help is our Mediator.*

carrying the commanded Meſſage to *Pharaoh*; God tells him, *Aaron thy Brother can ſpeak well, he ſhall be to thee inſtead of a Mouth.* So we alſo, when we ſhould pray, are dull and ſlow of Speech, and therefore muſt fly to *Chriſt*, our *Heavenly Aaron*, who is to us inſtead of a *Mouth.* The ſame thing is expreſſed to us by the *Throne of Grace*, Exod. xxv. 21. Therefore *Chriſt* commands us to pray in his Name, who is our eternal High-Prieſt, *having an everlaſting Prieſthood*, (Heb. vii. 26.) *interceeding for us*, (Rom. viii. 24.) *in whom we have boldneſs, and acceſs with confidence by the Faith of him*, Eph. iii. 12.

2. *The Holy Spirit.*

§. 3. The *ſecond* Help is *the Holy Spirit*, Zech. xii. 10. *I will pour out upon the Houſe of David, and the Inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the Spirit of Grace and Supplication.* This Spirit is given us as a Teſtimony of the Divine Grace, and our Adoption. Hence St. *John* ſays, 1 Epiſt. iv. 13. *By this we know that we are in God, becauſe He hath given us of his Spirit.* And St. *Paul*, Rom. viii. 15. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage, but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. For the Spirit beareth witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Sons of God.* He was alſo typified by the *Anointing* of the Prieſts under the Law, *Exod.* xxviii. 41. --- xxix. 1. in Imitation of whom, God hath anointed us with the Spirit of *Chriſt*, 1 Joh. ii. 20. That we ſhould offer to Him daily the Calves of our Lips, *Pſal.* lxix. 32. *Heb.* xiii. 15. This Spirit is the Author of all thoſe devout Aſpirations which we meet with *Dan.* ix. 19. *O Lord, hear, O Lord, forgive, O Lord, hearken and do.*

3. *The Promiſe of God.*

§. 4. The *third* Help to ſtrengthen us in Prayer, are *The Promiſes of God.* Pſal. l. 15. *Call upon me in the Day of Trouble, and I will deliver*

deliver thee. Pſal. xci. 14. *He ſhall call upon me, and I will hear him.* See alſo *Pſal.* cxlv. 19. *Luk.* xi. 11, 13, and 18. *Iſai.* lx. 24. *Before they call, I will hear.* Pſal. xxxiv. 16. *The Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Prayers.* Joel ii. 32. *Whoſoever ſhall call upon the Name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved.* Matt. vii. 7. *Ask, ſeek, knock.* Rom. x. 12. *The Lord is rich (in Mercy,* Eph. ii. 4.) *to all that call upon him.*

4. *Examples of thoſe that have been heard.*

§. 5. The *fourth* Help in Prayer, is the Remembrance of thoſe Saints, whoſe Prayers God hath heard. Look at the Examples of the Ancients, and be ſtrengthened: And we muſt needs be ſo, when we ſeaſonably call to mind Examples of God's former Providence, and Divine Aſſiſtance. Upon this Foundation, all the Prophets of old built their Prayers. When God was angry with *Iſrael* for the Tragedy of the Golden Calf, and ſaid to *Moſes*; *Let me alone, that my Wrath may wax hot againſt them, and I may conſume them,* (Exod. xxxii. 10.) Then *Moſes his choſen ſtood before him in the Gap,* as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it, *Pſal.* cvi. 23. putting God in Mind of his former Mercies, ſaying, *Lord, why doth thy Wrath wax hot againſt thy People, which Thou haſt brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, with great Power, and with a mighty Hand? Wherefore ſhould the Egyptians ſpeak and ſay, For Miſchief did He bring them out, to ſlay them in the Mountains, and to conſume them from the Face of the Earth? Turn from thy fierce Wrath, and repent of this Evil againſt thy People. And the Lord repented of the Evil which He thought to do againſt this People.*

God cannot chuſe but hear us for his eternal Goodneſs.

§ 6. *David* generally had recourſe to the ſame Remedy in almoſt all his Pſalms; putting (as it were) God in Mind of his former Mercies,

cies, Goodness, and Faithfulness: So *Psal.* xxv. 5. *Call to remembrance thy tender Mercies.* Psal. lxxvii.6,7. *I have considered the Days of old, and the Years that are past.* Psal. lxxxv. 1. *Lord Thou art become gracious to thy Land: Thou hast turned away the Captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the Offence of thy People, and covered all their Sin. Thou hast taken away all thy Displeasure, and turned thy self from thy wrathful Indignation. Turn us then, O God our Saviour, and let thine Anger cease from us. Wilt Thou be displeased at us for ever? and wilt Thou stretch out thy Wrath from one Generation to another? Wilt Thou not turn again and quicken us, that thy People may rejoice in thee?* How elegantly does the Prophet *Isaiah* use the same Form of Supplication, Chap. lxiii. 11. putting God in Mind of his former Mercies, and opening as it were, by this Key, the immense Treasures of his Compassion. *Where is He that brought them up out of the Sea, with the Shepherd of his Flock? Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right Hand of Moses, with his glorious Arm, dividing the Water before them, to make himself an everlasting Name? That led them through the Deep, as an Horse in the Wilderness, that they should not stumble? As a Beast goeth down into the Valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: So didst Thou lead thy People, to make thy self a glorious Name. Look down from Heaven, and behold from the Habitation of thy Holiness and of thy Glory; where is thy Zeal, and thy Strength, the Sounding of thy Bowels, and of thy Mercies towards me? Are they restrained? Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy Name is from everlasting.*

§. 7.

§. 7. Which Expoſtulation of the Prophet, is founded upon theſe Arguments. (1.) Becauſe the Love of God is *Eternal*, therefore it will not be withheld *from me.* (2.) I acknowledge my ſelf to be a Sinner, but at the ſame time I remember that thy Grace has *been extended* to Sinners, when touched with a ſerious Senſe of Repentance. *Pſal.* xxv. 7. *Remember not the Offences of my Youth.* (3.) My Sins have been very great, but let thine abundant Grace triumph over my Guilt. (4.) Remember that I am the Work of thine own Hands. *Job* x. 3, 9. *Remember, I beſeech Thee, that thou haſt made me as the Clay, and wilt thou bring me into Duſt again? Thy Viſitation hath preſerved my Spirit.* *Four Arguments for this.*

§. 8. The *fifth* Comfort in Prayer is, *The tender Love of God to Mankind*, and his Promiſes to help the Afflicted. *Pſal.* xxv. 18. *Look upon my Adverſity and Miſery; and forgive me all my Sins.* Again, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 7. *This poor Man cried, and the Lord heard him.* And we are ſufficiently aſſured, that God does not like proud inſolent Men, or deſpiſe the Miſeries of the Diſtreſſed. For God judgeth not, as corrupt Man judgeth, He hath not Eyes of Fleſh, *nor doth He ſee as Man ſeeth.* And as it generally happens among us, that the more need a Man has of Friends, the fewer he finds; ſo, on the other hand, God has a more tender and particular Regard for him that is Deſtitute and Afflicted. *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a contrite Heart, and will ſave ſuch as be of an humble Spirit,* Pſal. xxxiv. 19. And *Pſal.* x. 14. *Thou beholdeſt ungodlineſs and wrong: that thou mayeſt take the Matter into thine hand: the Poor committeth himſelf unto thee, for thou art the Helper of the Friendleſs.* And indeed, ſuch as they, are the proper

5.
The tender Love of God to Mankind.

God has a particular regard for the Afflicted.

per Objects of Divine Mercy. And to inhance the Comfort and Certainty of these Promises, the holy Psalmist, *Psal.* cxlvi. 7, 8, and 9. recites the several Kinds of Affliction, to which God more particularly engageth his Mercy. *The Lord helpeth them to right, that suffer wrong. The Lord feedeth the Hungry. The Lord looseth Men out of Prison. The Lord giveth Sight to the Blind. The Lord helpeth them that are fallen. The Lord careth for the Righteous. The Lord careth for the Stranger, He defendeth the Fatherless and Widow.* To this may be referred what the Prophet *Isaiah* says, Ch. lxvi. 2. *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and that trembleth at my Word.* And Psal. ix. 11, 19. *The Patient abiding of the Meek shall not perish for ever.* And *Psal.* cii. 18. *He turneth him to the Prayer of the poor Destitute, and despiseth not their desire.*

6. *The Divine Compassions.*

§. 9. The *sixth Help* is the Consideration of God's unspeakable Compassion. He puts a better Construction upon our Prayers than we intended, and understands our Necessities more perfectly than we can express them. He makes merciful Allowances for our Infirmities in Prayer; according to that of *Abraham*, Gen. xviii. 30. *Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak.* Hence St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. i. 3. says, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulation.* Compare this with *Psal.* ciii. 8. By virtue of this incomprehensible Compassion of God, none of our Prayers are in vain. But God keeps an exact Account of all our Sighs and Tears, (*Psal.* lvi. 9.) for the sake of those Tears which *Christ* our Blessed Saviour shed in the Day when He *offered up himself with strong Cryings and Prayers* upon the Cross, *Heb.* v. 7.

Our Tears are sanctified by the Tears of Christ.

§. 10.

§. 10. The *ſeventh* Help in Prayer, is the Remembrance of *the Covenant of Grace*, which God hath made with us, *Jer.* xxxi. 33. *This ſhall be my Covenant*, &c. And *Iſai.* liv. 10. *The Covenant of my Peace ſhall not be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* Chap. lv. 1, 3. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come, and I will make with you an everlaſting Covenant.* In which Covenant of Grace, is contained all the Aſſurance that our Prayers ſhall be heard. 7. *The Covenant of Grace.*

§. 11. What we have ſaid upon this Head, is elegantly comprized in the Prayer of *Daniel*, Ch. ix. 4, *&c. O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the Covenant and Mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep his Commandments. And now, O Lord our God, that haſt brought thy People forth out of the Land of Egypt with a mighty Arm, and haſt gotten Thee renown as at this Day.* (Here is the putting God in Mind of his former Mercies.) *Hear, O God, the Prayer of thy Servant, and cauſe thy Face to ſhine upon thy Sanctuary that is deſolate, for the Lord's ſake.* (This is pleading the Name and Merits of *Jeſus* the Meſſiah.) *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord, hearken and do*; (Theſe are the Groans of the Holy Spirit.) *O my God, incline thine Ear, and hear*; *open thine Eyes, and behold our Deſolations*, (in regard of his Promiſe,) *becauſe for our Sins, and the Iniquities of our Fathers, Jeruſalem and thy People are become a Reproach to all that are round about us.* (Here is a Confeſſion of Sin, and Acknowledgment of their Miſery.) *For we do not preſent our Supplications before Thee, for our Righteouſneſſes, but for thy great Mercies*; (this is an acknowledgment of Man's Unworthineſs, and God's Mercy, which is followed with a Remembrance of the Covenant,) *For thy City and thy People are called by thy Name.* *This elegantly ſet forth by* Daniel; *and preſſed.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX

The Devout Soul's Converſation with GOD.

PSAL. lxxxv. 6, 7, 8.

Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever, and wilt Thou ſtretch out thy Wrath from one Generation to another? Wilt Thou not turn again and quicken us, that thy People may rejoice in Thee? Shew us thy Mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy Salvation.

The familiar Converſation of a faithful Soul with God.

§. 1. IN theſe Words are contained the familiar Diſcourſe of the devout and faithful Soul with God. Who would venture to talk ſo freely to an offended Prince? But ſo indulgent is God to a faithful Soul, that He gives it leave, as if it were of his Bedchamber, to come freely and without reſtraint, into his Preſence. So ſoon as it enters, God immediately asks, *What is thy Deſire, come near, and be not afraid.* This is repreſented to us in the Story of *Bathſheba*, 1 Kings i. 15. going into the Preſence-chamber of King *David*, and making her Petition. Upon which, *the King ſware unto her with an Oath.* As alſo in that of *Eſther*, whom, ſo ſoon as ſhe came into his Preſence, the King touched with his Golden Sceptre. *Eſth.* v. 1.

A great Inſtance of God's Love to Man, that he vouchſafes to converſe with faithful Souls.

§. 2. We account it an Act of ſingular Grace and Favour, if a King, or Prince, vouchſafe to talk familiarly with his Subjects. Upon which account, the Emperour *Titus*, for his

his remarkable Condeſcenſions of that ſort, was called, *The Delight and Darling of Mankind.* But how much greater Favour and Happineſs is it, that God, the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, (whom the Pſalmiſt calls, *Pſal.* xlvii. 2. *The mighty and terrible Lord, the great King over all the Earth,*) ſhould not only talk with miſerable Men, who, as *Abraham* ſays, Gen. xviii. 27. *Are but Duſt and Aſhes*; but ſhould even converſe affectionately with rebellious Sinners, who are at Enmity with Him through Sin. (*Iſa.* lix. 2.) So that when a Chriſtian Soul conſiders on one hand, the Greatneſs and Majeſty of God; and the original Impurity, Corruption, Miſery and Vileneſs of Humane Nature on the other hand, he cannot chooſe but cry out with *David*, Pſal. viii. 4. *Lord, what is Man that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that thou viſiteſt him?* For the moſt righteous Man living muſt acknowledge himſelf unworthy to converſe with God. This was the Opinion of Righteous *Abraham*, who therefore excuſes his preſuming to intercede with God for the *Sodomites*, ſaying: *Let not the Lord be angry, and I will ſpeak*, Gen. xviii. 32. and yet every time that *Abraham* ſpeaks, God vouchſafes to anſwer. And as He is the Father of the Faithful, He gives us a notable Example of the devout Soul's Converſation with God. For it is a moſt certain and undoubted Truth, that whenſoever the faithful Soul calls upon God by Prayer; He never fails to anſwer it by the Divine Conſolations of his Spirit.

God always anſwers the Devout Soul.

§. 3. An inſtance of this we have, *Pſal.* lxxxv. 1, *&c.* where the Pſalmiſt calls upon God in theſe Words: *Lord, thou art become gracious to thy Land. Thou haſt forgiven the Offence*

Some notable Inſtances of this.

Offence of thy People, and turned thy ſelf from thy wrathful Indignation. Wilt thou not turn again, and quicken us? Shew us thy Mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy Salvation. I will hearken what the Lord God will ſay concerning me. And the Anſwer that he received in the Ground of his Heart, he ſays, ver. 10. was this: *His Salvation is nigh unto them that fear Him.* And as he here prays, that he *may hear what the Lord God will ſay concerning him.* God anſwers him, *Pſal.* l. 7. *Hear, O my People, and I will teſtifie unto thee.* Pſal. vi. 1. The Afflicted Soul prays, *Lord, correct me not in thine Anger.* To which God anſwers, *Pſal.* ciii. 8. *The Lord is full of Compaſſion and Mercy, Long-ſuffering, and of great Goodneſs.* Pſal. cxxxix. 7. The Soul ſays, *Whither ſhall I fly from thy Face?* To which the Lord anſwers, *Matt.* xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that Labour, and are heavy Laden, and I will refreſh you.* Jer. x. 23. The Soul ſays, *I know, O Lord, that the Way of Man is not in himſelf; it is not in Man that walketh, to direct his Steps.* To which it is anſwered, *Pſal.* xxxii. 8. *I will inſtruct thee, and teach thee in the Way in which thou ſhalt go, and I will guide thee with mine Eye.* Pſal. lxxxvi. 11. The Soul prays, *Teach me thy Way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy Truth.* To which Chriſt himſelf anſwers, *Joh.* xiv. 6. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Way,* if thou wouldſt not wander; *the Truth,* if thou wouldſt not be deceived; *the Life,* if thou wouldſt avoid eternal Death.

How God anſwers the Soul in his holy Word.

§. 4. Pſal. xxxviii. 3, 6. The Soul complains, *There is no Health in my Fleſh, neither is there any reſt in my Bones, by reaſon of my Sin. My Wounds ſtink, and are corrupt through my Fooliſhneſs.* To which it is anſwered,

More Inſtances for proof thereof.

Iſa.

Iſa. liii. 5. *The Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed.* Jer. xvii. 14. The devout Soul ſays, *Heal me, O Lord, and I ſhall be healed: Save me, and I ſhall be ſaved.* It is anſwered, *Pſal.* x. 3. *Who forgiveth all thy Sins, and healeth all thine Infirmities.* The pious Soul complains, and cries out with *Manaſſeh* in his Prayer, *I have ſinned above the number of the Sands of the Sea.* To which God anſwers by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, Chap. xliii. 25. xliv. 22. *I have blotted out, as a thick Cloud, thy Tranſgreſſions, and as a Cloud thy Sins.* The Soul cries out, alas! I am a grievous Sinner. And *Jeſus Chriſt*, Mat. ix. 13. anſwers, *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* Pſal. xxv. 6. The Soul prays, *Remember not the Sins and Offences of my Youth.* To which God anſwers by the Prophet *Ezech.* Ch. xviii. 21, 22. *If the Wicked will turn from all his Wickedneſs that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die. All his Tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, ſhall not be mentioned unto him.* Pſal. li. 3. The Soul cries out, *Waſh me throughly from my Wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my Sin.* To which God anſwers, Iſai. i. 18. *Though your Sins be red like Crimſon, they ſhall be white as Wool.* Pſal. cxliii. 2. *Lord, enter not into Judgment with thy Servant; for in thy Sight ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified.* To which it is anſwered, *Joh.* iii. 17. *God ſent not his Son into the World, to condemn the World, but that the World thro' him might be ſaved. He that believeth on him is not condemned.*

§. 5. Pſal. li. 12. The Soul prays, *Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.* To which it is anſwered, *Ezek.* *Other Anſwers of Prayer from God.*

Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *A new Heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes.* Pſal. xxxviii. 6. It is ſaid; *I am brought into ſo great Trouble and Miſery, that I go mourning all the Day long.* To which is anſwered, *Iſa.* lxi. 2. *The Lord hath ſent me to comfort all that Mourn.* Pſal. xxv. 18. It is ſaid, *Look upon my Miſery and Trouble.* And it is anſwered, *Iſa.* lxv. 1. *To whom ſhould I look, but to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit.* Pſal. lvi. 9. *Thou telleſt my flittings.* To which the Lord anſwers, *Matt.* x. 30. *Even the very Hairs of your Head are all numbred.* Pſal. xlii. 3. The Soul cries out, *When ſhall I come and appear before God?* To which is anſwered, *Joh.* xii. 16. *Where I am, there ſhall my Servant be alſo.* Pſal. xiii. 1, 2. The Soul complains, *How long, O Lord, wilt Thou forget me, for ever? how long wilt Thou hide thy Face from me? How long ſhall I take counſel in my Soul, and be ſo vexed in my Heart? how long ſhall mine Enemies triumph over me?* To which is anſwered, *Iſa.* liv. 7, 8. *For a ſmall Moment have I forſaken thee; but with everlaſting Kindneſs will I have mercy on thee.* Compare thy preſent Suffering with thy eternal Reward. Wait for the Promiſe, which, though late, will certainly be fulfilled at laſt. *Hab.* ii. 2.

This univerſally confirm'd by all holy Scripture.

§. 6. *Pſal.* xxii. 12. The Soul ſays, *Thou art my God, go not far from me; for Trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help me.* To which it is anſwered, Pſal. xci. 15. *I will be with him in Trouble, I will deliver him, and glorifie him.* Pſal. xiii. 4. The Soul prays, *Lighten my Darkneſs, that I ſleep not in Death.* To which it is anſwered, *Hoſea* xiii. 14. *I will ranſome them from the Power of the Grave: I will redeem them from Death.* Phil. i. 23. The

The Soul ſays, *I deſire to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt.* To which Chriſt anſwers, *Luk.* xxiii. 43. *This Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.* In a Word: The holy Scripture, as ſacred and venerable as it is, is nothing elſe but the Converſation of the Devout Soul with God. Whenſoever the Soul raiſes it ſelf to God, and ſpreads its Miſery and Complaints before him; then does God certainly anſwer it, either by ſome internal Comfort, or by the external Application of the Words and Promiſes of the Holy Scripture.

Which is nought elſe but the devout Soul's Converſation with God.

CHAP. XXXI.

The Divine Mercy inviting and encouraging the Chriſtian's Faith.

PSAL. lxxxv. 11.

Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other.

§. 1. THE Goodneſs of God comes forth to meet us, and gives merciful Anſwers to the Prayers of Faith. *For his Mercy embraceth us on every ſide*, Pſal. xxxii. 11. She calls to us in the Language of the Prophet, *Jer.* iii. 12, 13. *Return, ſaith the Lord, and I will not cauſe mine Anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, and will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine Iniquity, that thou haſt tranſgreſſed againſt the Lord thy God.* To which Faith anſwers, *Pſal.* li. 1. *Have Mercy*

How the Grace and Goodneſs of God meet the Prayer of Faith.

The Call of Mercy, and the Anſwer of Faith.

upon me, O Lord, after thy great Goodneſs, and according to the Multitude of thy Mercies, do away mine Offences. Mercy calls, *Joh.* vi. 37. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Faith anſwers, *Cant.* i. 4. *Draw me, and I will run after thee.* Mercy ſays: *Iſa.* lxi. 1. *The Lord hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort all that mourn.* Faith anſwers out of *Pſal.* li. 14. *Give me the Comfort of thy Health again, and ſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit.* Mercy ſays out of *Iſai.* xliii. 25. xliv. 22. *I have blotted out as a thick Cloud thy Tranſgreſſions, and as a Cloud thy Sins.* Faith anſwers out of *Pſal.* xxv. 18. *Look upon mine Adverſity and Miſery, and forgive me all my Sins.*

Faith depends upon Divine Grace.

§. 2. Mercy comforts us, and ſays out of *Pſal.* ciii. 13. *As a Father pitieth his own Children, even ſo is the Lord merciful to them that fear him.* To which Faith anſwers out of *Iſa.* lxiv. 8. *And now, Lord, Thou art our Father.* Mercy ſays: *Matt.* xi. 28. *Come unto me.* Faith anſwers: *To Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul.* Mercy ſays: *Jer.* iii. 1. *Thou haſt played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return to me, ſaith the Lord.* Faith anſwers: *Luk.* xv. 18. *I will ariſe and go to my Father, and will ſay unto him: Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son: Make me as one of thy hired Servants.* Mercy ſays: *Luk.* xv. 24. *This my Son was dead, and is alive again; was loſt, and is found.* To which Faith anſwers: *Pſal.* xiii. 5. *My Truſt is in thy Mercy, and my Heart is joyful in thy Salvation.* Mercy proclaims out of *Iſai.* lv. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come to the Waters.* To which Faith anſwers: *Pſal.* xlii. 1, 2. *As the Hart deſireth the Water-brooks; ſo panteth my Soul after Thee, O God. My Soul is a Thirſt for God, yea, even for the living God; when ſhall I come to appear*

Other Divine Calls, with the Soul's Anſwer to them.

pear before the Presence of God? Mercy says: *Psal.* ciii. 3. *Who forgiveth all thy Sins, and healeth all thine Infirmities.* Faith answers: *Psal.* cxliii. 2. *Enter not Thou into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord.* *Faith regards Christ alone.*

§. 3. Mercy says: *Joh.* xiv. 6. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* Faith answers: *Psal.* xxv. 3. *Shew me thy Way, O Lord, and teach me thy Paths. Lead me forth in thy Truth, and learn me.* Mercy promises: *Hos.* xiii. 14. *I will ransome them from the Power of the Grave: I will redeem them from Death. O Death, I will be thy Plague, O Grave, I will be thy Destruction.* Faith answers: *Psal.* lxviii. 20. *He is our God, even the God of whom cometh Salvation: God is the Lord, by whom we escape Death.* Mercy says: *Joh.* xi. 25. *I am the Resurrection, and the Life, he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live.* To which Faith answers: *Job* xix. 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. And though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God.* Mercy says: *Isai.* xli. 10. xlix. 16. *Behold, I have graven thee upon the Palms of my Hands. And there is none that shall take thee out of my Hand,* xliii. 13. To which Faith answers: *Psal.* xxxi. 6. *Into thy Hands, O Lord, I commend my Spirit: for Thou hast Redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of Truth.*

CHAP. XXXII.

The great Benefit and Efficacy of Divine Praiſe and Thankſgiving.

PSAL. lxxvii. 3, 6.

When I am in Heavineſs, I will think upon God: when my Heart is vexed, I will complain. I call to remembrance my Song: And in the Night I commune with mine own Heart, and ſearch out my Spirits.

How we are to behave our ſelves under the Croſs.

§. 1. THIS beautiful Sentence is an excellent Rule of Life, teaching every Man how to behave himſelf under the Croſs. For as the Word of God is the Rule of our Life in Adverſity; (according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxxii. 9. *I will inform thee, and teach thee in the Way wherein thou ſhalt go: and I will guide thee with mine Eye.* And *Pſal.* lxxiii. 23. *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy Counſel, and after that receive me with Glory.* Yea, moreover, as the Word of God ought to be the Rule of our Faith, as the Pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.* cxix. 105. *Thy Word is a Lantern to my Feet, and a Light unto my Paths.* And *Pſal.* xvii. 5. *O hold thou up my Goings in thy Paths, that my Footſteps ſlip not.*) ſo alſo ought it to be our Rule and Direction in bearing the Croſs, as *David* teaches us, ſaying: *When I am in Heavineſs, I will think upon God*; i. e. I will look up to God, who has laid this Croſs upon me, and beg of Him comfort and aſſiſtance in the Day of my Trouble.

The Word of God is to be the Rule:

§. 2.

§. 2. Hence may every Chriſtian Brother learn, when he is in Affliction, not to fix his Thoughts too much upon the immediate Cauſes or Inſtruments of his Sufferings; but to lift up his Heart to God; apply to himſelf the Divine Promiſes; to pray and ſing Praiſes to his God; theſe are the true and certain Conſolations of an afflicted Soul. Thus ſays the Prophet *David*: *In the Day of my Trouble I ſought the Lord.* For as a Mind oppreſſed with Grief, eaſes it ſelf, by communicating its Troubles to a faithful Friend: So are our afflicted Spirits refreſhed and comforted, when we open our Hearts by Prayer and Thankſgiving to God. Thus holy *David*, Pſal. lxxvii. 6. *called to remembrance his Song, and communed with his own Heart in the Night*; i. e. when it was Night he did long earneſtly for the Morning, that he might riſe, and comfort his weary Soul by Prayers and Thankſgivings unto God his Comforter; but that in the mean time, he communed with his own Heart, and poured out his Soul in Secret, and the God that ſaw and heard in Secret, that underſtood even the moſt ſecret Sighs and Breathings of his dejected Spirit, did Comfort, Strengthen, and Refreſh him.

We muſt not fix our Thoughts upon the immediate Cauſes of our Sufferings

Praiſing God is the Way to conquer our Tribulations.

§. 3. Amongſt other things that may be learned from this beautiful Paſſage of the Pſalmiſt, this is one: That the Singing of holy Hymns and Praiſes unto God, proceding from a truly pious and devout Soul, are attended with great Advantages, and ſpiritual Bleſſings. The Truth of this doth appear, 1. From Nature it ſelf, or the Book of the World. 2. From the Efficacy of Prayer. 3. From the Examples of the Old Teſtament. 4. From the Hiſtories of the New. 5. From the Examples of holy Men under both, who

Great Power in ſpiritual Hymns.

were by this means filled with the Holy Ghoſt. 6. From the Nature and Property of holy Pſalms. 7. From the frequent Uſe of Divine Hymns among the Ancients, whenever they were under any Adverſity. All which Inſtances do certainly prove that there is a great Virtue and Efficacy in devout Pſalms and Hymns. By which I would not be underſtood, to mean nothing but bare Words, and empty Sounds, void of Faith and Devotion; but ſuch a vigorous Faith, ſuch an ardent Devotion, as may break forth into holy Hymns and ſpiritual Songs, ſinging and making Melody from the Heart unto the Lord. But to return to the abovementioned Arguments. Of which in their order.

I. *The Praiſe of God is the End and Deſign of the whole Creation.*

§. 4. As to the *Firſt*, viz. The Book of the World, or Nature, it is as clear as the Light, that *the Praiſe of God* is the great END of the whole Creation. That this is the great Employment of the Angelical Choirs, does appear from almoſt innumerable Places of the *Revelations* of St. *John*, as alſo from *Iſa.* vi. 3. and the cxlviiith *Pſalm*, inviting all the Creatures to praiſe God, for whoſe Glory they were created, begins with thoſe bleſſed Spirits; ver. 2. *Praiſe the Lord all ye Angels; Praiſe him all his Hoſt.* From the Angelical, he deſcends to the Planetary World, ſaying: *Praiſe him Sun and Moon, Praiſe him all ye Stars and Light.* To which may be referred that of *Job*, Chap. xxxviii. 7. *When the Morning Stars ſang together.* Thence he deſcends into *the Sea*, calling the Whales, and all the numerous Inhabitants of the Waters, to praiſe the God that made them. Thence looking up to the Regions of *the Air*, he calls to *the Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapours, Wind and Storm,*

Storm, fulfilling his Word. Thence he paſſes to the *Earth*: *Mountains, and all Hills, fruitful Trees, and all Cedars.* Thence to the living Creatures: *Beaſts, and all Cattle, Worms, and feathered Fowls.* Thence to Men, beginning with the Rulers of the World: *Kings of the Earth, and all People, Princes, and all Judges of the Earth, Young Men and Maidens, Old Men and Children, praiſe the Name of the Lord.* And laſtly to the Church of God: *All his Saints ſhall praiſe him, even the Children of Iſrael, even the People that ſerveth him.*

§. 5. The *ſecond* Argument, was the Efficacy of the Prayer of Faith. This is abundantly atteſted by the Word of God, the Examples of holy Men, and our own daily experience. For we are aſſured by all the Promiſes of God, that not one devout Prayer, not one pious Sigh, or Tear, comes from us in vain. *Pſal.* vi. 10. —lvi. 9. *Put my Tears into thy Bottle.* Pſal. cxxvi. 5. *They that ſow in Tears, ſhall reap in Joy.* Pſal. cxlv. 8. *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, yea, all ſuch as call upon him faithfully.* Not to mention, that nothing in this World can be ſucceſsful without Prayer, foraſmuch as every good, and every perfect Gift, cometh down from God, and muſt be begg'd of Him: This is a certain Truth, that without conſtant Prayer, a Man can neither live nor die in Peace. Now, as the Singing of holy Hymns and Pſalms is nothing elſe but the Prayer of a devout Soul overflowing with divine Joy, in which holy Men of God have celebrated and conveyed to Poſterity the Mercies and Wonders of God their Creator; it is plain from hence, that the Singing Praiſes to God, is an act of Devotion, full of ſpiritual Comfort and Advantage.

2. *The Power of Prayer.*

3. *Examples of the Old Teſtament.*

§. 6. *Thirdly*, This is confirmed by many Examples out of the Old Teſtament. *Exod.* xv. 1. *Deut.* xxxii. 1 *Sam.* ii. *Iſa.* xii. 26. xxxviii. 64. *Jon.* ii. *Hab.* iv. and the whole Book of Pſalms.

4. *And of the New.*

§. 7. *Fourthly*, The ſame is confirmed by the Examples of the New. Particularly thoſe Two divine Hymns, of *Mary* and *Zachariah*, Luk. i. 47, 68. One of which, the Church has appointed to be ſung in the Morning, and the other in the Evening, as it were a Morning and Evening Sacrifice unto God; thereby inſtructing us, that ſinging Pſalms and Praiſes unto God, ought to begin and end the Day. According to the Advice of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xcii. 2, 3. *It is a good thing to give Thanks unto the Lord, and to ſing Praiſes unto thy Name, O moſt Higheſt. To tell of thy Loving-kindneſs betimes in the Morning, and thy Truth in the Night Seaſon.* But why thy Loving-kindneſs *betimes in the Morning*? *Becauſe it is renewed every Morning*, Lam. iii. 23. And why *thy Truth in the Night Seaſon*? Becauſe *the Lord, that neither ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth, is our Watch by Night*, Pſal. cxxi. 3. To this we may add, what we are told by St. *Matthew*, (Chap. xxvi. 30.) That *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, at the Celebration of his laſt Supper, *ſung an Hymn* with his Diſciples. And that of St. *Paul* to the *Epheſians*, Chap. v. 19. *Be ye filled with the Spirit, ſpeaking to your ſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, ſinging and making Melody in your Hearts unto the Lord.* Col. iii. 16, 17. *Let the Word of Chriſt dwell in you richly, in all Wiſdom; teaching and admoniſhing one another in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, ſinging with Grace in your Hearts unto God.* And that of St. *James*, Chap. v. 13. *Is any*

one

one Afflicted among you? Let him Pray. Is any Merry? let him ſing Pſalms.

§. 8. *Fifthly*, By Pſalms and ſpiritual Songs, the Holy Men of the Old Teſtament were filled with the Holy Ghoſt. 1 *Sam.* x. 5, 6. xix. 24. Of this we have two Inſtances. *Firſt*, when *Samuel* had anointed *Saul* to be King, he gave him a Sign, ſaying: *Thou ſhalt meet a Company of Prophets with a Pſaltery, and a Tabret, and a Pipe, and an Harp before them, and they ſhall Prophecy. And the Spirit of the Lord ſhall come upon thee, and thou ſhalt Prophecy with them, and ſhalt be changed into another Man.* The *Second* is, when *Saul* had ſent Meſſengers to take *David*, they met a Company of Prophets, and both they and *Saul* himſelf began to Prophecy Like unto this, is that which we read 2 *Kings* iii. 15. concerning *Eliſha*, that when the Minſtrel began to play, the Spirit of Prophecy came upon him. 5. *Divine Songs have a great Power and Influence upon the Mind.*

§. 9. It is certain, that in the Old Teſtament there were ſeveral Conſorts of Divine Muſick,; ſome of Trumpets, ſome of Pſalteries and Harps, ſome of Cymbals, and almoſt all Kinds of Muſical Inſtruments. From whence, ſome imagine that the *Songs of Degrees* (as ſome of the Pſalms are called) took their Names. For they did not ſing all ſorts of Pſalms to the ſame Inſtrument; but adapted their Muſick to their Subject, whether it were cheerful or ſorrowful. And all theſe various kinds of Muſick, with which under the Old Teſtament they ſang Praiſes unto God, being but a part of the ritual and ceremonial Service, are now ceaſed; and in their ſtead, our Spirit, Soul, Mind, and Mouth, are become the Trumpet, Pſaltery, Harp, and Cymbal of God. To which St. *Paul* alludes, *Col.* iii. 26. when he ſays, *ſinging in your Hearts unto God.* By which expreſſion, we are by no means forbidden, either *The ſacred Uſe both of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſick.*

ther in Publick or Private, to Praiſe God with Voices or Inſtruments of Muſick; but that all this ought to be done with a lively Devotion, in the Spirit, and from the Heart; leſt Religion ſhould be thought to conſiſt in empty Sounds, and external Pomp of Divine Service.

6. *As the Pſalms are various, ſo are their Intentions and Effects.*

§. 10. *Sixthly*, The Order and Variety of the Pſalms, prove the ſame thing. For ſome of them are Supplicatory, others Conſolatory; ſome Penitential, others Doctrinal; and laſtly, others Prophetical; from which variety of Stile and Intention, the devout Soul may reap variety of Comforts and Benefits.

7. *Suited to various Caſes.*

§. 11. *Seventhly*, We are inſtructed by the Examples of *Moſes* and *David*, that the Pſalms were uſed upon different Occaſions. As 1. *Againſt Enemies*. Theſe may not improperly be called, *Prayers for Protection*. Such is *Pſal.* lxviii. which *Moſes* ſang when he was advancing againſt his Enemies: *Let God ariſe, and let his Enemies be ſcattered.* Some think that the xci. Pſalm was compoſed by *David* in the Time of that great Peſtilence, which in the Space of three Days ſwept away 70000 Men, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 15. And I doubt not but many a Man has been protected from contagious and peſtilential Diſeaſes by a proper Uſe of this Pſalm. 2*dly*, *In Time of Victory againſt Enemies*. Theſe we may call *Pſalms of Victory*. Thus *David*, when he had gotten Six Victories, compos'd the xviii*th* Pſalm, as may be gathered from the 2 *Sam.* xxii. 1. So *Jehoſhaphat* marched againſt the *Moabites* with Singers going before him, who were to bleſs and praiſe the Lord with a loud Voice; and he conquered, as we are told, 2 *Chron.* xx. 21. 3. *In great Calamities*. Thus we read, 1 *Sam.* xxi. 13. That *David*, when he changed his Behaviour before *Achiſh*, compoſed the xxxiv*th* Pſalm, as appears by the Title.

So

So he ſang the third, when he fled from *Abſalom*. So when the Apoſtles, *Act.* iv. 31. being in great Difficulties, prayed in the Words of the ſecond Pſalm, *The Place was ſhook in which they were gathered together*. And theſe you may not improperly call *Pſalms of Mourning or Lamentation*. 4. There are alſo *Euchariſtical Pſalms*. So 1 *Chron.* xvii. 7. *David* ſung the cv*th* Pſalm before the Ark of the Covenant. 5. There are *complaining Pſalms*, as the cii*d* appears to be by the Inſcription; alſo *againſt Calumniators*, as the iv*th*, vii*th*, lii*d*. alſo *againſt Diſeaſes*, as the xxx*th*.

§. 12. Thus much concerning the Efficacy and admirable Benefits of Divine Hymns and Thankſgivings. From whence it appears, that it is the Duty of a Chriſtian to praiſe God, as well as to pray to Him every Day. For *firſt*, it being the conſtant Employment of the holy Angels to bleſs and praiſe God, when the Church on Earth does the ſame, there ariſes from thence a divine and heavenly Communion betwixt the Church Militant on Earth, and the Church Triumphant in Heaven; fulfilling, in ſome ſort, that Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*. Come then, ye devout Souls, and when ye retire into your Cloſets to pour out your Souls before God in ſecret, remember alſo to praiſe Him with a Pſalm of Thankſgiving. (2.) Moreover it would not be improper, nor unbecoming a Chriſtian, to accuſtom Children, from their Infancy, to ſing Pſalms and Praiſes unto God, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* viii. 3. *Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings thou haſt perfected Praiſe*, (or *Strength*,) *for thine Enemies*. The Advantage of which, is expreſſed in the following Words: *That thou mighteſt ſtill the Enemy, and the Avenger*. (3.) We are encouraged to this Duty by God's gracious acceptance

Chriſtians obliged to praiſe God continually.

ceptance of it, and delight in it; upon which account, the Pſalmiſt calls upon Him, ſaying: *Thou art Holy, O Lord, O thou that inhabiteſt the Praiſes of Iſrael*, Pſal. xxii. 3. (4.) Experience it ſelf teaches us, that by Divine Hymns, we kindle and blow up Flames of Devotion in our Souls, and receive rich returns of ſpiritual Joy, lively Comfort, ſolid Peace and Reſt in GOD.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The Reaſons why we ought daily to ſing Praiſes to GOD.

PSAL. cvi. 1. cvii. 1. cviii. 1, 29.

Praiſe the Lord, for he is Good: for his Mercy endureth for ever.

The Duty of perpetual Praiſe.

§. 1. THUS ſaith the Prophet *David*, Pſal. cxix. 164. *Seven Times a Day do I praiſe Thee, becauſe of thy righteous Judgments*; i. e. Many times in a Day do I ſing Praiſes in Honour of thy Holy Name. By which he teaches us, that a Man cannot ſpend his Time better, than by retiring at leaſt once a Day into his Cloſet, and praiſing God in Secret. Yea, though his Head and his Hands be employed in Labour and Buſineſs, yet may he, in the quiet Stilneſs of his Heart, offer up his Praiſes unto God whereſoever he be. For the Prayer of a true Chriſtian, is not confined to any certain Time or Place, ſeeing it conſiſts *in Spirit and in Truth*, Joh. iv. 23. *In Spirit*, I ſay, which

A Man may always praiſe God in the Stilneſs of his Soul.

which cannot be circumſcribed, or confined by any Limits, or Time, or Place. To which alſo relates the Admonition of St. *Paul*, (Col. iii. 16. when he commands us, *to ſing with Grace in our Hearts to the Lord*; that being indeed the fitteſt Oratory for that internal and ſpiritual Service.

Reaſons for daily Praiſing God.

§. 2. But as we are all too dull and unactive in the Diſcharge of this Duty, therefore has He in his Word left us certain Remedies or Helps to quicken us. And the firſt of theſe is, *His own Command*. For He created us his Servants and Creatures for his own Glory, as we our Selves hire Servants to manage and perform certain Portions of Buſineſs for us. So then he that does not continually praiſe God, was created by Him in vain, and cannot be his Servant. Hence we are commanded over and over again in holy Scriptures, above all things to praiſe God. Thus, *Pſal.* cxiii. 1. *Praiſe the Lord, praiſe Him, O ye Servants of the Lord. Pſal.* cxviii. 1. *Praiſe the Lord.* Pſal. l. 15. *Thou ſhalt praiſe me.* Which is an argument to us, that the greateſt Part of our religious Worſhip, that our chief Service in this World, and Happineſs in the next, conſiſts in the Exerciſe of Praiſe and Thankſgiving; upon which account, we ought to eſteem it as our greateſt Happineſs, and moſt honourable Employment. So ſays the Holy Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* lxiii. 6. *My Soul ſhall be filled as it were with Marrow and Fatneſs, when my Mouth praiſeth thee with joyful Lips.* And again, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 4. *Delight thou in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee thy Hearts deſire.* O how truly happy then and bleſſed is He, who is come to that Perfection of divine Worſhip, as to delight in the Lord, and to be continually breaking forth into devout Hymns, and

1. *The Command of God.*

Nothing is ſweeter to the Soul than to praiſe God.

Pſalms

Pſalms of Thankſgiving! *He ſhall dwell in the Courts of God, and be ſatisfied with the Pleaſures of his Houſe, even of his holy Temple*, Pſal. lxv. 5. For if we think it an honourable thing to be employed in the Service of any earthly Prince; how much more ought a Man to rejoice, when he conſiders that he may be admitted to the Service of the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, being in his own Nature no better than Duſt and Aſhes, and a Slave of Sin and Corruption? Which ſingle Conſideration ought to be of ſo much Weight, as to encourage him continually to praiſe God.

Nothing more Honourable.

2. *A Man's own Advantage.*

§. 3. *Secondly, The Advantage that ariſes to a Man's ſelf* by this Exerciſe, is another Argument. For ſeeing that God has no need of our Praiſes, and is neither the better nor the worſe for our Obedience or Neglect, and withal, that the moſt acceptable Praiſe we can offer Him, is but at beſt the Fruit of *polluted Lips*, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaks, *Iſa.* vi. 5. it follows, that the Advantage redounds only to our ſelves, as being the Means of drawing down upon us the Favour and Bleſſings of Heaven. *A thankful Heart being the proper Receptacle of Divine Grace.* This, in ſhort, is it which brings down God into our Souls, and makes us truly the living Temples of the Holy Ghoſt; and where God is, there is the Fulneſs of Divine Bleſſing. Moreover, by the daily Exerciſe of Thankſgiving, we keep up Communion with the bleſſed Choires of triumphant Saints and Angels in Heaven. They are inceſſantly ſinging the Praiſes of God above: Whilſt we below, by the ſame Exerciſe, are conquering, by degrees, the Enemies of our Salvation, *Iſal.* xviii. 30. till at length, by a conſtant Practice of this divine Duty, we are filled with an immoveable Aſſurance of being united to God,

We by this means maintain Communion with the Church Triumphant.

and

and being for ever Happy with him in Heaven, according to the Promiſe of our Bleſſed Lord, *Joh.* xii. 26. *Where I am, there ſhall my Servant be alſo.* And now, would to God that wretched Man would ſo lay theſe Conſiderations to Heart, and ſo ſincerely endeavour to practiſe them, that every Soul might become a living Oratory, or Houſe of Prayer.

3. *The Love of God.*

§. 4. *Thirdly*, We are encouraged to the daily Practice of Thankſgiving, from the Conſideration of *the Compaſſion, the Loving-kindneſs, and everlaſting Goodneſs of God.* This is an Argument continually inculcated in the Book of Pſalms; to teach us, that the chief and fundamental Reaſon why we ought continually to bleſs and praiſe God is, becauſe *He is Good and Gracious, and his Mercy endureth for ever.* For no Heart of Man can conceive, nor Tongue expreſs, the Heighth and Depth of that Love, that diſpoſes the Great and Mighty God to ſhew himſelf thus Loving and Merciful to wretched Mankind, who are Duſt and Aſhes, loaden with Iniquities, and Enemies to God; and that He not only continues his wonted Mercies to them, in ſpight of their repeated Provocations; but is alſo perpetually diſpenſing freſh Showers of Bleſſings upon the whole rebellious Race. And this is what every Man muſt needs experience in himſelf. Look into thine own Soul, whoſoever thou art that readeſt this, and tell me, what canſt thou find there but Miſery and Sin. Yet God continues Merciful and Long-ſuffering, is ſlow to Anger, and not willing to puniſh as thy Sins have deſerved. This is a degree of Mercy, which thy own Heart muſt confeſs, no Man living does or can exerciſe towards his Brethren. We cannot ſo long forbear to puniſh thoſe that have

The greateſt Cauſe of Thankſgiving

offended

offended us, and when we puniſh, Mercy does ſeldom plead for the Criminal, till we are ſatiated with Vengeance; whereas the Rod of God is often lifted up, and his Mercy averts the impending Stroke, and reſcues the Sinner from Puniſhment. So that every Man muſt confeſs that the Puniſhments of Heaven are not only leſs than we deſerve, but are always qualified with a double Portion of Mercy. From whence it follows, that God is eſſentially and truly LOVE; which every Man does daily experience in himſelf.

Other Reaſons for praiſing God.

§. 5. Read but the holy Scriptures, and ſee how tenderly, yea, how paſſionately God vouchſafes to deal with Mankind, ſo as no Father or Mother upon Earth can be more indulgent to their darling Child. Thus, *Jer.* xxxi. 20. *Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleaſant Child? For ſince I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill: Therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have Mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord.* So that God not only beſtows his Favours plentifully both on our Souls and Bodies, but does it with ſo much tenderneſs and good Will, that as himſelf ſays, *Jer.* xxxii. 41. *He rejoices over us to do us good.* As if it were an Addition to his infinite Happineſs, to find Men willing to be happy in the bleſſed Emanations of his Love, which is indeed the trueſt Demonſtration that it is ſincere. And were not God thus merciful, our very Being would ſoon be at an end, which nothing but his infinite Mercy can ſuſtain; yea, *His Loving-kindneſs is better than Life it ſelf*, Pſal. lxiii. 4. *which* (as he ſays, *Pſal.* xxxii. 11.) *embraceth us on every ſide*, as tender Mothers hug and embrace ſucking Infants.

§. 6.

§. 6. The ſame Goodneſs of God diſcovers it ſelf in all his Creatures, in whom, as in a Glaſs, we may contemplate the wonderful Riches of Divine Mercy. *The Earth is full of the Riches of God*, ſays the Prophet, *Pſal.* civ. 24. For whoſe ſake (think you) were all thoſe good Creatures both in Heaven and Earth created? Not for himſelf certainly, who is himſelf All-ſufficient, and ſtands not in need of any Creature. The Sun, the Moon, and Stars, ſerve not to enlighten Him; the Fire, the Air, the Earth, and Water, do him no ſervice, but us. And when He *fills our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs*, Acts xiv. 17. it is his Goodneſs that we Taſte, it is his Bounty that Feeds and Nouriſhes us. He it is that gives us healthy and ſound Bodies, which is more valuable than the Poſſeſſions of the whole Univerſe. If it ſhould pleaſe God to turn our Water into Blood, as He did in *Egypt*, (Exod. vii. 20) we could not, with all our boaſted Treaſure, purchaſe one ſingle Drop to relieve our greateſt Neceſſity. Or ſhould He, as He did once, (*Exod.* x. 22.) cover the Earth with thick Darkneſs, the greateſt Man upon Earth could not with all his Riches purchaſe one ſingle gleam of Light. Or what would all the World ſignifie to him, that ſhould but for one Moment be deprived of the Benefit of the Air? All theſe are very great Bleſſings of God, but becauſe they are common, few are ſo ſenſible as to be thankful for them. I ſhall not here inſiſt particularly of the Mercies of *Redemption and Sanctification*, in which the Goodneſs and Mercy of God do ſo tranſcendently appear, that Eternity it ſelf would be too ſhort to praiſe and magnifie it as we ought. For to redeem a loſt World, is much more glorious than to create it at firſt; and to regenerate a Man by a ſpiritual new Birth, than at firſt to produce

The Works of Creation.

Works of Redemption.

him by a Natural. In a Word, whoſoever will carefully conſider the Works and Providence of God, may read the plain Characters of his Mercy and Love in every Part of the Creation.

Why God does ſometimes withdraw his temporal Bleſſings from us.

§. 7. But, dull ungrateful Creatures as we are, how apt are we to forget our Benefactor, and deſpiſe the Hand that bleſſes us! Then God is forced in meer Mercy to uſe the Rod of Diſcipline, and take away our worldly Comforts from us, thereby to reduce us to a ſober Senſe of our Selves, and our Dependence on Him, to whom all our Thanks are due. Thus God ſpeaks by the Prophet *Hoſea*, Ch. ii. 8. *She did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and multiplied her Silver and her Gold: Therefore will I return, and take them from her.* So that *the Croſs* is, as it were, the Light by which we ſee and diſcover the true Value of divine Bleſſings, and who it is that beſtows them. On the other Hand, Ingratitude is the greateſt Degree of Blindneſs, and the higheſt Affront againſt God. And ſeeing the whole World is full of the Glory of God, it is ſtrange that Man alone ſhould be unconcerned therein. But the Excellency of the Divine Love diſcovers it ſelf chiefly in this, that He beſtows his Favours even upon Rebels and Enemies. *For he maketh his Sun to riſe, and his Rain to fall upon the Juſt and upon the Unjuſt*, Matt. v. 45.

§. 8. *Laſtly*, The Goodneſs and Mercy of God does in this reſpect appear ſtill more Illuſtrious, that though we ſtill continue ungrateful, and *our Hearts caſt forth wickedneſs as a Fountain caſteth forth her Waters*, Jer. vi. 7. yet he ſtill ſtrives to conquer our Ingratitude by his Goodneſs, and doth not take his Mercy from us, as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Pſal.* cxxxvi. 1. *Lord, thy Mercy endureth for ever.* So that as the Heart of Man is as it were, *an abyſs of Iniquity*,

(Jer.

(Jer. xvii. 9.) ſo God is an abyſs of Mercy, an ever-flowing Fountain of Goodneſs, ſo much ſuperiour in Kind, as well as in Degree, to that of any created Being, that He doth nothing but Good, and receives nothing in return but Evil, which nothing but the firſt uncreated and infinite Good could do or ſuffer. And when provoked by our Wickedneſs, He ſeems ſometimes to lay aſide his Mercy, *and ſhut up his Lovingkindneſs in Diſpleaſure*, Pſal. lxxvii. 10. Yet even that is nothing but a *paternal Reſentment*, not tending to Deſtruction, but ſo tempered with Compaſſion, that Mercy triumphs over Judgment. So *Pſal.* lxxxix. 31. *If his Children forſake my Law, I will viſit their Offences with the Rod: Nevertheleſs my Compaſſion I will not take from him.* And *Hab.* iii. 2. *In Wrath remember Mercy.* So we read, *Lam.* iii. 33. *He does not willingly afflict the Children of Men.* For Puniſhment, if I may ſo expreſs it, is an unpleaſant Work to Him, being perfectly oppoſite to the eſſential Goodneſs of his Nature.

§. 9. And tho' the Scriptures often ſpeak of *God's being Angry*, yet ſuch Expreſſions are uſed only in Compliance with the Weakneſs of Humane Capacities. Yea, God is never angry with his faithful Servants; but only with wicked and obſtinate Sinners; and when He corrects thoſe in Mercy, He puniſhes theſe in his Wrath; for *the Wrath of God abideth on them*, Joh. iii. 36. Hence holy *David* prays, *Lord, correct me not in thine Anger*, Pſal. vi. 1. As if he ſhould ſay, Lord, correct me with Mercy, as a tender Father does his beloved Child. Wherefore, it is as impoſſible that the Mercy and Goodneſs of God ſhould fail or ceaſe towards Mankind, tho' He ſometimes afflicts us, as that the Sun ſhould be always hidden under a Cloud, or the vaſt Ocean be ſucked up in a Spunge. *For his Mercy*

God does not puniſh his faithful Servants in Anger, but in Love.

endureth for ever, Pſal. cxxxvi. 1. And this is the Reaſon of God's Reconciliation and Forgiveneſs, not once or twice, but as often as the Sinner begins to repent and ſue for Mercy. For this Mercy does not laſt for a few Hours, or a few Days only, but for ever; ſo that the entire Nature and Eſſence of God, infinite as it is, is nothing elſe but LOVE. So that no ſooner does the Sinner ſincerely pray for Pardon, but the merciful God freely beſtows it, yea, He is more willing and ready to pardon, than we to ask it.

The Bleſſings of this Life are a foretaſt of the future.

§. 10. Now if God pours his Bleſſings upon us ſo plentifully in this Life, that we taſt and enjoy them by all our Senſes: How much more fully ſhall we be convinced in the other World, by the moſt bleſſed Experience, that *His Mercy endureth for ever?* If we receive ſo many Mercies from Him now in this Vale of Sin and Miſery, as that *in Him we live, and move, and have our Being*, Acts xvii. 28. How much more glorious will his Mercy appear hereafter, when we ſhall be cleanſed from all Sin, and rendred capable of the moſt pure Enjoyments?

4. *The Examples of the Saints.*

§. 11. *Fourthly*, The Praiſes of God have been the ſpecial Employment of all holy Men. Moſt of the Prophets of the Old Teſtament compoſed Pſalms and holy Hymns, to the Praiſe and Honour of God. Thus did *Moſes*, Exod xv. Deut. xxxii. *Hannah*, 1 Sam. ii. *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 Chron. xx. *Iſaiah* xii. *Hezekiah*, Iſai. xxxviii. *Jeremiah*, Lam. iii, *&c.* but of all theſe, *David* was the moſt Eminent, who is ſo fervent in the Praiſe of God, as to wiſh, that *his Praiſe might ever be in his Mouth*, Pſal. xxxiv. 1. To theſe we may add the Three Children in the fiery Furnace. In the New Teſtament, the bleſſed Virgin, the Mother of God, and *Zacharias*, Luk. i. 47, 68. Alſo St. *Paul* and

and St. *Peter*, in many Places of their Epiſtles. All whoſe Examples do ſufficiently ſhew, that they believed Acts of Thankſgiving to be the moſt noble Services we can poſſibly perform in this Valley of Miſery. And therefore if we are deſirous to be partakers with the Saints in Glory, it is neceſſary we ſhould imitate their Examples in Praiſing and Magnifying God.

§. 12. *Fifthly*, All *the Creatures invite us to praiſe God.* Thus *David* ſpeaks to them all, *Pſal.* ciii. 22. *Praiſe the Lord, all ye Works of his, in all Places of his Dominion.* And indeed, every Creature in its Way, does give Glory to its Creator. For He has ſtamped ſuch illuſtrious Characters of his Glory and Goodneſs on them all, that they cannot conceal it if they would. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his Handy-Work*, ſays *Pſal.* xix. 1. And *Job* xxxviii. 7. *Where waſt thou when the Morning Stars ſang together?* For even the Sun, the Moon, and all the Hoſt of Heaven, when they give their Light, do at the ſame Time bear Witneſs to the Majeſty and Goodneſs of Him that made them. *Great is the Lord that created them*, ſaith the Son of *Sirach*, xliii. 5. So *the Earth* praiſes God when ſhe is Fruitful and Flouriſhing. The *Herbs and Flowers*, by their Smell, Beauty, and variety of Colours, ſhew forth the Might and Wiſdom of their Maker. The Birds with their muſical Notes; the Trees with their variety of Fruits; the Sea with its Fiſhes and Monſters; and in ſhort, all the Creatures in their ſeveral Places, praiſe the God that made them, whilſt they fulfil his Will, and anſwer the End for which they were created. And not only ſo, but they call upon Mankind, by the Virtues and Powers which God has implanted in them, as Witneſſes of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to praiſe and glo- 5. *And all Creatures.*

rifie God on their behalf. Which way ſoever we turn our Eyes, we ſee ſo many Marks of Divine Goodneſs, that one would think the Book of the World, or external Nature, were nothing but one great Hiſtory of, or Panegyrick upon, its Maker. But foraſmuch as God has been more gracious and bountiful unto Man than to any other of his Creatures, he is certainly obliged to larger and more frequent Returns of Gratitude than they.

6. *The Majeſty of God.*

§. 13. *Sixthly*, We muſt know, that when we have done all we can to ſet forth the Greatneſs and Majeſty of God, the beſt and moſt devout of us all muſt fall ſhort of the Dignity of the Subject, which no Tongue of Men or Angels can worthily expreſs. For *who can expreſs the noble Acts of the Lord, or ſhew forth all his Praiſe?* Pſal. cvi. 2. So Ecclus. xliii. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. *We may ſpeak much, and yet come ſhort: Wherefore in ſum, He is All. How ſhall we be able to magnifie him? For he is great above all his Works. When you glorifie the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed. And when you exalt him, put forth all your Strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough. Who hath ſeen him, that he may tell us? And who can magnifie him as he is?* Therefore the moſt exalted Praiſes of holy Men, are more properly acts of Admiration and Wonder, than attempts to expreſs to the full the infinite Love and Majeſty of God. Thus holy *David* ſtirs up his Soul, and all the Powers thereof, to praiſe his God with Thankſgiving. So *Moſes*, Exod. xv. 2. *The Lord is my Strength and Song, and he is become my Salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him an Habitation; my Fathers God, and I will exalt him.* Obſerve, he calls God *his Strength*; and were not that Strength with us, in us, and above us, we ſhould

quick-

quickly ſink and vaniſh into our primitive nothing, according to that of *Pſal.* xxxix. 6. *Every Man living is altogether Vanity.* He calls him alſo *his Salvation*; for He is our Righteouſneſs againſt Sin; our Strength againſt Infirmities; our Refuge in Perſecution; our Joy in Sadneſs; and laſtly, our Life in Death. *God is our All.*

§. 14. And now, What is there in Heaven, or in Earth, that may be compared unto our God? with whom is ſuch abundant Salvation; who by his Power ſuſtains the Heaven and the Earth, and all that is therein. *Iſai.* xl. 12. Whoſe Purity the brighteſt Seraphims adore with wonder. *Iſai.* vi. 3. At the Terrour of whoſe Majeſty, the Heaven, the Earth, and all that is under the Earth, bow and tremble. *Exod.* xv. 3. So Praiſe-worthy, that all his Works ought to be had in Honour, and every Creature ought to praiſe his Maker. So All-wiſe, ſo All-powerful, as to create all Things out of Nothing; to bring Light out of Darkneſs; Righteouſneſs out of Sin; and Life out of Death? Should we now paſs to the Myſtery of our Redemption, who can expreſs it? He ſuffers his only Son to become Man, that we might become the Sons of God: He undergoes all the Miſeries of Humane Nature, that we might enjoy everlaſting Felicity: He took upon Him the Form of a Servant, that we might be partakers of his Heavenly Kingdom: Laſtly, He underwent Death for us, that we thro' Him might have Life-eternal: Such myſterious, ſuch miraculous Love, who can worthily celebrate? Where is he that can explain how the infinite God, *whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain*, (1 King. viii. 27.) can yet dwell in us, and we in Him? How He made our immortal Souls, and will receive them to himſelf after their ſeparation from the Body? How

He ſhall raiſe our dead Bodies from the Duſt of the Earth, and make them capable of Eternal Life? How wonderful and ſtrange is it, that *that which is Mortal, ſhould put on Immortality*? 1 Cor. xv. 43. Wherefore, *Praiſe the Lord, O my Soul.*

Great Reaſons to praiſe God.

§. 15. Whoſoever then, deſires to anſwer the End of his Creation, and not to be thought the only Ingrate among all the Works of God; he that deſires to walk worthy of his Chriſtian Calling, and after Death, to be partakers with the Saints in Light and everlaſting Glory; let his Soul praiſe the Lord, and let him beſeech God, that He would never ſuffer his Soul to be unmindful or negligent of this Duty. And thoſe things which we cannot ſufficiently praiſe in this World, ſhall be worthily celebrated in the next, where all our humane Infirmities ſhall be perfected in Glory. *For now we ſee as through a Glaſs darkly, but then Face to Face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Which God grant, for *Jeſus Chriſt* his ſake.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

That praiſing God is the higheſt and moſt honourable Employment of Men and Angels.

PSAL. xcii. 3.—

Upon an Inſtrument of ten Strings, and upon the Lute: upon a loud Inſtrument, and upon the Harp. For Thou, Lord, haſt made me glad through thy Works: and I will rejoice in giving Praiſe for the Operations of thy Hands. O Lord, how glorious are thy Works, thy Thoughts are very deep. An unwiſe Man doth not well conſider this: and a Fool doth not underſtand it.

§. 1. THERE are Six Pſalms, which are diſtinguiſhed by the Name of *Golden Songs*, (viz. xvi. lvi. lvii. lviii. lix. lx.) to ſhew us that Divine Hymns and Thankſgivings are the proper Riches and Treaſures of devout Souls, more valuable than Gold and precious Stones. And that this is the greateſt Honour that Man is capable of, appears from hence. 1. That a cheerful Confidence in God, is that which procures the Soul the greateſt Liberty of Acceſs to Him. Hence it is ſaid, *Pſal.* xcvi. 6. *Glory and Worſhip are before him, Power and Honour are in his Sanctuary.* And that this freedom of Acceſs is the higheſt Honour of Man, the very Angels themſelves confeſs, who glory in that exalted Privilege. *Luk.* i. 19. *I am Gabriel that ſtand before God.*

The Golden Pſalms.

The Praiſe of God, Man's higheſt Honour.

§. 2.

How it is an Heavenly Employment.

§. 2. The giving Praiſe to God, is a great Honour to Man, becauſe thereby *we become like the Angels in Heaven.* Therefore our bleſſed Saviour, *Matt.* xxii. 30. *Luk.* xx. 36. pointing out the ſupreme Happineſs of Men in Heaven, ſays, *They ſhall be like the Angels of God.* Which tho' it be ultimately underſtood, of the Purity, and other Angelical Perfections of their glorified Bodies in another Life; in which reſpect we ſhall not only be like the Angels, but alſo the glorified Body of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, according to *Phil.* iii. 21. and 1 *Joh.* iii. 2. *It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, but this we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhnll be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* But foraſmuch as no Man can be like Him in the other World, that has not been conformed to Him in this; *i. e.* that has not believed in Him, imitated his holy Life, followed Him in his Meekneſs and Humility; and in a Word, perfectly cloathed himſelf with the Image of the patient, humble, afflicted and crucified JESUS; (that He may be like Him in his glorious, exalted, and perfect State in the other World:) So ſhall no Man be like the holy Angels in Heaven, that has not endeavoured to conform himſelf to their Examples on Earth.

If we here be like the holy Angels in Praiſing God, we ſhall be there like them in Glory.

§. 3. Now there is no Inſtance in which we can better imitate them here, than by offering up devout and inceſſant Prayers and Praiſes to God. For this is the Employment of the holy Angels, as it is deſcribed, *Iſa.* vi. 3. *Pſal.* ciii. 20. Whoſoever then does this, imitates thoſe bleſſed Spirits, and maintains Fellowſhip and Communion with them. Hence it follows, as I ſaid before, that to be continually celebrating the Praiſes of God, is the nobleſt and moſt honourable Employment that Man is capable of. And this may be done at any Time, and in any

Place,

Place, by the pious Aspirations of a devout Soul, arising from the Centre and Ground of the Heart. For from thence do the true Praises of God proceed, whence is that expression, *Col.* iii. 16. *Singing with grace in your Hearts unto the Lord.*

§. 4. That singing Praises to God is the greatest Glory, and highest Honour that a Man can receive, appears from hence: That by this a Man becomes as it were the Harp, Psaltery, or musical Instrument, on which the Holy Spirit is perpetually sounding forth the Praises of God. Of this we have a very beautiful Representation, *Rev.* xiv. 2. where the Evangelist saw a great Multitude of the Elect, cloathed in White, and following the Lamb of God, and *he heard the Voice of many Thousand Harpers harping with their Harps.* This also was typified under the Old Testament by that admirable variety of musical Instruments mentioned by Holy *David*, Psal. cl. All which do express nothing else but the various Gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which the Name, the Praise, the Honour, the Wisdom, the Mercies, and wonderful Works of God were to be declared and published to the World; and which are now laid aside, only to make room for the more divine Harmony of spiritual Musick, even that of Praise and Thanksgiving in the Temple of the Soul. For what the Musical is to the Man, that is the Soul of Man to the Spirit of God, being made tunable and harmonious by the Hand that holds it. Thus it is said, *Psal.* viii. 2. *Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings thou hast perfected Praise.*

By singing Praise a Man becomes as it were the Organ or musical Instrument of God.

The Davidical *Musick, why laid aside.*

§. 5. And now, what greater Glory can the Heart, Mouth, or Soul of Man desire and enjoy, than to be as so many Organs or musical Instruments of the Spirit of God? This is what *David*

The Musick of the Divine Spirit.

vid means, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 2. *The Spirit of the Lord ſpake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue.* And the Apoſtle, *Eph.* v. 18, 19. *Be ye filled with the Spirit. Speaking to your ſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, ſinging and making Melody in your Hearts to the Lord.*

The Pleaſure of it.

§. 6. *Fourthly*, That the Praiſing God is a Man's greateſt Privilege, and moſt valuable Treaſure, appears from hence: *Becauſe in that Exerciſe is contained the greateſt ſpiritual Pleaſure.* Hence it is ſaid, *Pſal.* xcii. 4. *Thou, Lord, haſt made me glad through thy Works, and I will rejoice in giving Praiſe for the Operation of thy Hands.* And as in this divine Joy conſiſts the greateſt Part of the Happineſs of Eternal Life, and the Kingdom of God within us, which we are told, *is Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. xiv. 17. So whoſoever deſires a Foretaſt of the Happineſs of that bleſſed State, he may eaſily obtain it by the daily Exerciſe of Praiſe and Thankſgiving: Which when it proceeds from a ſincere and unfeigned Heart, gives Life and Divine Joy both to the Soul and Body; as we are plainly told, *Pſal.* lxiii. 2. lxxxii. 2. For what elſe is Paradiſe it ſelf, but pure Joy and unmixed Pleaſures; where *we taſt and ſee how gracious the Lord is*, Pſal. xxxiv. 9. And what elſe is Eternal Life, but the Abundance of this Joy, *and Pleaſures at God's right Hand for evermore*, Pſal. xvi. 11.

Singing Praiſe to God is a Foretaſt of Eternal Life.

The Advantage of it as to increaſe of Wiſdom.

§. 7. *Fifthly*, The Greatneſs and Excellency of this Duty appears from hence: That by it *we are led into the Contemplation of all the wonderful Works of God*, from whence ſuch Rays of divine Light and Wiſdom dart upon the Soul, as to ſcatter and diſſipate the Clouds of Error and Darkneſs in which it is naturally involved. Thus ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xcii. 5, 6. *How wonderful are thy Works, O Lord, thy Thoughts are very*

very deep. An unwise Man doth not well consider this: and a Fool doth not understand it. And St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. *The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep Things of God.* Therefore the more a Man knows of God, the more he praises Him; and the more he praises Him, the more he encreases in the Knowledge of Him; thus by degrees sinking deeper and deeper into the Abyss of divine Wisdom, till at length he falls, by a natural Necessity, into all the Heights and Depths of divine Love. For the higher any one rises in the Praises of God, so much the deeper he descends into the Contemplation of his Nature and Providence. I do not mean the impertinent Enquiries of some curious Searchers into forbidden Mysteries, but those Riches of the divine Wisdom which God often discovers to the Soul that loves and praises Him, which strike her dumb by the *excess* of Glory and sublime Manifestations of himself, such as Words cannot express.

By praising God, we open the Treasures of divine Wisdom.

§. 8. For if the Queen of *Sheba* were so astonished at the Riches and Magnificence of *Solomon*'s Court, as to break out into these Words, 1 *Kings* x. 7, 8. *Thy Wisdom and Prosperity exceedeth the Fame which I heard. Blessed are thy Men, happy are these thy Servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy Wisdom.* How much more should the devout Soul be swallowed up in Rapture and Astonishment, at those Revelations of divine Light and Glory which God frequently vouchsafes to them that love and praise Him, making them cry out with the Prophet *David*, Psal. xcii. 6. *Lord, how wonderful are thy Works, thy Thoughts are very deep.* And again, *Psal.* xxv. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is among them that fear him, that He may shew them his Covenant.* And again, *Psal.* li. 6. *Thou shalt make me to understand Wisdom secretly.*

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Therefore, as the Queen of *Sheba* ſays, *Bleſſed are thy Men, happy are theſe thy Servants, which ſtand continually before thee, and hear thy Wiſdom:* So thoſe that continually praiſe God, are the Servants of God, ſtanding continually about his Table, believing in Spirit the divine Wiſdom, and hearkening to the Word of God.

§. 9. This is the neverfailing Spring and Fountain of true Wiſdom, which one of the holy Fathers treats of, calling it, *The vaſt Ocean of Divine Wiſdom.* But Sublime and Glorious as it is, *An unwiſe Man doth not conſider it, and a Fool doth not underſtand it.* In a Word, by how much the nearer a Man is united to God by Praiſe and Thankſgiving, ſo much the clearer Manifeſtations has he of the Riches and Treaſures of the divine Wiſdom; which at the ſame Time are hidden, concealed, and as it were locked up from thoſe that are without underſtanding in the Ways of God.

§. 10. *Sixthly*, We may conclude, that praiſing God is the higheſt Honour, the moſt exalted Privilege, and greateſt Benefit to Man; becauſe by this he gets the Victory over all his Enemies, both Ghoſtly and Bodily. See *Pſal.* viii. 3. xviii. 4. cxviii. 15. We have a plain Inſtance of this in the Story of *Jehoſaphat*, who, with one divine Hymn, routed a vaſt Army of his Enemies without loſs of Blood; as we find, 2 *Chron.* xx. 21, 22. Such Songs of Victory are frequently to be met with in the Pſalms: As *Pſal.* xviii. xlvi. lxxvi, *&c.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV

Of PATIENCE, by which we are to overcome the Croſs, and wait for the Promiſed Glory.

HEB. x. 36.

But ye have need of Patience, that after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promiſe.

Patience, what it is.

§. 1. TRUE Chriſtian PATIENCE, is that Virtue, by which, in all Afflictions that cannot with a ſafe Conſcience be avoided, we reſign our Selves to the Divine Will, and ſubmit entirely to it, chuſing rather to ſuffer the greateſt Evils, than murmur againſt God, or let go our dependence on Him.

The Reaſon of this is the Providence of God.

§. 2. The *firſt* Reaſon or Ground of this Virtue is, *The Counſel and Will of God*, by which we are fore-ordained to Sufferings and Afflictions; according to *Rom.* viii. 29. *Whom he foreknew, them alſo he predeſtinated to be made conformable to the Image of his Son.* As therefore God appointed his own beloved Son for the Sufferings of the Croſs, that thereby he might bring Him to Glory; ſo alſo has He appointed to all the true Members of the myſtical Body of Chriſt, every one his Croſs, without which they cannot be partakers with their Head. To each of theſe he has marked, meaſured, and as it were weighed out, his exact Portion of Affliction, which they cannot eſcape, much leſs ſhake off by impatience; but may make it eaſie by Obedience and humble Submiſſion, and overcome it by the Power of *Jeſus Chriſt*. §. 3.

The Afflictions of the last Times are to be born with Patience, because they were foretold.

§. 3. The *second* Reason why we ought to be patient is, *The approaching Consummation of all Things*; at which Time, as our Blessed Lord has told us, *Iniquity shall abound, and Charity shall wax cold*, Matt. xxiv. 12. The Consequence of which must be, that the sincere good Christians will be exposed to various Afflictions, Crosses, Injuries, and sundry kinds of Death. *For all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution*, 2 Tim. iii. 12. And *Christ* himself assures us, *Joh.* xv. 20. xvi. 1. That the Righteous must expect Tribulations and Persecutions for the Testimony of a good Conscience. Yea, the whole Revelation of St. *John* testifies, that *Antichrist* shall persecute the Church of God till the very coming of the blessed *Jesus* in Glory, and his Oppressions shall not have an end, till the Dragon and false Prophet be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. Do not therefore deceive thy self with golden Dreams of Felicity, but possess thy Soul in Patience, and strengthen thy self against the approaching Calamities.

The Expectation of the grand Restitution of all Things, should make us patient.

§. 4. *Thirdly*, The Hope of the Restitution of all Things, and the Expectation of everlasting Happiness, is another Argument to support our Patience. *For as the Husbandman waiteth for the precious Fruit of the Earth, and hath long patience for it, till he receive the early and the latter Rain*; comforting himself under all his Toils with the Hopes of a plentiful Harvest, *Jam*, v. 7. So should Christians also learn to *possess their Souls in Patience*, Luk. xxi. 19. and to persuade themselves, that the great and universal Harvest of the long expected Day of the Lord is at hand, that shall repair all our Losses, and give to every one of us the Fruit of our Labours. For as the Husbandman does by no means reckon his Seed lost, though it be

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for a while buryed in the Bowels of the Earth; but only hides it there, in hopes of a more abundant Harveſt: So when Providence is pleaſed to take from us our Lives, our Friends, our Eſtates, or Preferments, we muſt not look upon them as loſt; but be aſſured that they are ſown in hope of the great Day of Harveſt, where we ſhall reap to Eternity, *if we faint not*, Gal. vi. 9. So alſo, *Pſal.* cxxvi. 5, 6. Afflictions are compared to Seed-time. *They that ſow in Tears, ſhall reap in Joy. He that now goeth on his way Weeping, and bearing forth good Seed, ſhall doubtleſs come again with joy, and bring his Sheaves with him.*

Chriſt's Coming to Judgment.

§. 5. *Fourthly*, Another Support of Patience, is the *Coming of Jeſus Chriſt.* When all our Sorrows ſhall be done away, yea, be turned into Joy, *Joh.* xvi. 20. and the juſt Judgment of God ſhall fall upon our Enemies. And then *ſhall every one have praiſe of God*, 1 Cor. iv. 5: and this Day is at hand. *Behold*, (ſaith St. *James*) *the Judge ſtandeth at the Door.* And St. *Paul*, Rom. xii. 19. *Vengeance is mine, ſaith the Lord.* The Time of the Croſs is but ſhort, but the Glory that follows it will be Eternal. And that Day of Deliverance cannot be far off.

The Truth of God.

§. 6. The *fifth* Support of Patience is, *The Truth and Faithfulneſs of God.* By the Conſideration of which, *we ought to ſtrengthen our Hearts*, as St. *James* ſays, Ch. v. 8. For as we uſe to tie a tender Tree to ſome other Tree or Poſt, that it may not be broken by the Winds; and caſt Anchor in a Storm, to fix the Ship, that it may not be driven by the Tempeſt: So ought we to join and apply our faint and weak Hearts to the firm Pillar of God's Word, and fix the Ship of our Souls, by the *Anchor of Hope*, that it ſink not, *Heb.* vi. 19. For how many and great Promiſes of divine Aſſiſtance

in the holy Scriptures? And how many Inſtances of ſtrange Deliverances have we daily before our Eyes? And what variety of Methods has God to deliver us? How many has he preſerved in Peſtilence and Famine, 2 *Kings* vi. 15. vii. 17. and delivered from the Peril of the Sword, 2 *Chron.* xx. 22. xiv. 12. For God can turn the Hearts of Enemies to Unity and Peace, or diſappoint the Deſigns of the moſt malicious Adverſary, as appears plainly in the Hiſtory of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, Matt. ii. 20. *Behold*, (ſays the Angel) *they are dead that ſought the Child's Life.*

§. 7. God can alſo convert an Adverſary, as He did St. *Paul*, Act. ix. 3. How often does He by this means diſappoint the bloody Intentions of wicked Men? *Saul* had a Deſign upon the Life of *David*, and thought he was ſo penned in that he could not eſcape; but God recals him by the Meſſage of a new Invaſion of the *Philiſtines* upon his Country, 1 *Sam.* xxiii. 27. And *Joh.* vii. 44. the chief Prieſts having ſent their Officers to lay hold on the bleſſed *Jeſus*, find them ſo affected by our Lord's Diſcourſes, that they could not find in their Hearts to touch him. I paſs over God's ſmiting the Enemies of his Servants with Blindneſs, as we read, 2 *Kings* vi. 18. And in the Story of *Lot*, *Gen.* xix. 11. And that of *Athanaſius*. I paſs over alſo, the innumerable Legions of Angels that guarded the Chriſtians of old Time, and miraculouſly preſerved them from imminent Dangers, as in the Story of St. *Peter*, Acts v. 19. xii. 7. And how often was St. *Paul* wonderfully preſerved, and the Deſigns laid for his Life ſtrangely diſcovered? *Act.* xxiii. 16. but at length, by a temporal Death, God puts an end to the Miſeries of his Servants.

§. 8.

§. 8. *Sixthly*, How lovely and glorious ſhall *the Recompence of paſt Afflictions* be to the Faithful, in the other World, which they would not exchange for all the Glories and Pleaſures of this? *Matt.* v. 4. *Bleſſed are they that Mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* And *Rev.* xxi. 4. and *Iſa.* xxv. 8. it is ſaid, that *God ſhall wipe away all Tears from his Saints.* But how ſhall He wipe away the Tears of thoſe that never wept? *Eternal Conſolation.*

§. 9. *Seventhly*, We muſt ſet before our Eyes the Examples of holy Men, as *Abel*, *Noah*, *Lot*, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Joſeph*, *David*, *Job*, and eſpecially *Moſes*, who, as the Holy Scripture witneſſes, was *very Meek above all the Men that were upon the Face of the Earth*, Numb. xii. 3. The People ſometimes murmuring againſt him, ſometimes chiding him, and ſometimes threatning to Stone him; but he, like an immoveable Rock, broke their ſtubborn Hearts by his Meekneſs and Patience, pacifying them with ſoft Words, praying to God for them, and begging rather to be blotted out of the Book of Life, than that they ſhould be cut off in his Diſpleaſure, *Exod.* xxxii. 32. So alſo, *Elias* having been moſt unkindly dealt with, yet obtained Rain from God upon his ungrateful Country, 1 *Kings* xviii. 45. Why ſhould I mention *Michaiah*, who, before the Kings *Ahab* and *Jehoſhaphat*, was ſtruck by the falſe Prophets, and caſt into Priſon, only for dealing truly and ſincerely with his Prince? 1 *Kings* xxii. 24. 2 *Chron.* xviii. 23. Why ſhould I mention *Iſaiah* ſawn aſunder? *Jeremiah* bitterly perſecuted by his Country Men? *Jer.* xv. 10. *Daniel* caſt into the Den of Lions? *Dan.* vi. 6. *John* the Baptiſt beheaded? *Matt.* xiv. 10. St. *Paul*, and all that Catalogue of Afflictions which he endured? 2 *Cor.* xi. 23, *&c.* *Examples of Patience.*

The Sufferings and Trials of the reſt of the Apoſtles, and all the noble Army of Martyrs? See *Heb.* xi. 35, *&c.*

The Way to Glory.

§. 10. Should you ask all theſe, By what Way they entred into Heaven? They will all with once Voice anſwer, *By the Way of the Croſs*, and Tribulation, *Acts* xiv. 22. Neither did *Chriſt* himſelf enter any other Way. So ſays St. *Peter*, 1 Epiſt. ii. 21, 23. *Chriſt ſuffered for you, leaving you an Example, that ye ſhould follow his Steps: Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, He threaten'd not; but committed himſelf to Him that judgeth righteouſly.* So great was the Patience of our Bleſſed Redeemer, that though the Sun hid its Head at the Time of his Paſſion, being unwilling to ſee ſo great Indignities; though the Earth trembled, and the Rocks rent, *Luk.* xxiii. 44. yet He ſtill hanging upon the Croſs, murmured not againſt his Enemies, or by either Word or Geſture diſcovered the leaſt Impatience; but on the other hand, prayed for his Enemies, begging that they might be ſaved by that Blood which they ſo unjuſtly ſhed.

Correction's good for Children.

§. 11. And if this be the Lot of the Children of God, that He correcteth every one whom He loveth and receiveth, it follows, that we muſt either ſuffer, or quit our Title to be the Sons of God. *Heb.* xii. 6. Now, if our Heavenly Father ſpared not his own Son, though without Sin, but chaſtiz'd him with the Rod of Affliction; Canſt thou, who art but an adopted Son, and polluted with innumerable Sins, canſt thou expect to eſcape it? Moreover, if God bear ſo patiently with our Provocations, how much more patient ought we to be, when we are puniſhed for our good, upon the Hopes of Amendment? *Let us rather rejoice*, as St. *Peter* adviſes us, 1 Epiſt. iv. 13.

13. *inaſmuch as we are partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings, that when his Glory ſhall be revealed, we may be glad alſo with exceeding Joy.*

§. 12. *Eighthly*, We ſhall bear our Afflictions patiently, when we conſider, that *Chriſt Jeſus has ſanctified our Croſſes by his own*, and has taken away the Curſe and Sting of it, and made it to us the Inſtrument of Bleſſing, Life, and Glory. For as the Sufferings of *Chriſt* ended in Glory, ſo will the Sufferings of every Chriſtian be turned into everlaſting Joy. *Chriſt has ſanctified all our Afflictions.*

§. 13. *Ninthly*, Behold the glorious Reward of thoſe that bore their Croſs with Patience. For though many of the holy Martyrs were moſt barbarouſly treated, moſt inhumanly puniſhed, and cruelly put to Death, ſome thrown to wild Beaſts, ſome boiled in Oil, others in melted Lead; yet I believe there is no Man ſo impious or fooliſh, as to ſay, that he had not rather be in their Condition now, than that of their Murderers. Who would not prefer the Condition of poor *Lazarus*, to that of the rich Glutton? *Luk.* xvi. 25. But if thou wouldeſt obtain the Glory of the Saints, thou muſt alſo bear the ſame Croſſes, and with the ſame Patience. To this we muſt refer thoſe Words of our bleſſed Saviour: *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil of you falſly for my Names ſake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven.* As alſo that of *Rom.* viii. 17, 18. *If we ſuffer with Chriſt, we ſhall alſo be glorified with him.* And again, *I reckon that the Sufferings of this mortal Life, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us.*

§. 14. *Tenthly*, Let the *deep Compaſſion of God* be a Support to our Patience, who can no more forget us, than a Mother can forget her ſuck-

The Mercy and Loving-kindness of God, an impulsive Cause of Patience.

ing Child, *Jer.* xlix. 15. Hence He says, *Jer.* xxxi. 20. that *his Bowels are troubled for Ephraim, that he will have Mercy upon him.* Hence also He is said to be *Faithful, that will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able,* 1 Cor. x. 13. not chastening us for our Hurt, but that we may obtain everlasting Life, *and not be condemned with the World,* 1 Cor. xi. 32. But if the Cross be nothing but a Token of God's Favour, tell me, wouldst thou rather choose the Pleasures and Dainties of the rich Glutton here, and have his Punishment hereafter, than enter into Eternal Life by the Way of the Cross, and wear a Crown of Glory?

An Encomium on the Cross.

§. 15. All that has been said on this Head, is elegantly expressed in the Epistle to the *Hebrews,* Chap xii. 1. which being full of Weight and Consolation, I shall here transcribe. *Let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith; who, for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despised the Shame, and is now set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God. Wherefore consider him that endured such contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your Minds. For ye have not yet resisted unto Blood, striving against Sin. And ye have forgotten the Exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto Children, My Son, despise not thou the Chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with Sons: for what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye Bastards, and not Sons. Moreover, we have had Fathers of our Flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: Shall we not much rather be in Sub-*

Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they, verily, for a few Days chaſtened us after their own pleaſure; but he for our Profit, that we might be partakers of his Holineſs. Now, no chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous: Nevertheleſs, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs, unto them that are exerciſed thereby.

CHAP. XXXVI.

That the Divine Conſolations do produce Patience under Afflictions.

JAM. i. 12.

Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation, for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord has promiſed to them that love him.

No Chriſtian without his Croſs.

§ 1. AS God has provided Phyſick for the Body in external Nature; ſo has he alſo for the Soul in his holy Word. And foraſmuch as in this Valley of Miſery and Tears, no Man can be perfectly free from Croſſes, Afflictions, and Troubles; ſo nothing can be more ſeaſonable, than to collect ſome certain Heads out of the Word of God, by a proper Application of which, if need be, we may find Help and Comfort in the Hour of Temptation.

All Afflictions come from God.

§. 2. The *firſt* Comfort is, The Conſideration of the *Divine Providence, which lays the burden upon us. The Lord killeth, and the Lord maketh alive: he bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up*, 1 Sam. ii. 6. *Proſperity and Adverſity, Life and Death, Poverty and Riches, come of*

the Lord, Eccluſ. xi. 14. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*, Job i. 21. *Are not two Sparrows ſold for one Farthing, and not one of them falleth to the Ground without your Heavenly Father*, Matt. x. 29. *I form the Light, and create Darkneſs: I make Peace, and create Evil*, Iſa. xlv. 7. *Happy is the Man whom God correcteth; therefore deſpiſe not thou the Chaſtening of the Almighty: For he maketh ſore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and his Hands make whole*, Job v. 17, 18. It is therefore a fooliſh Thing to be angry with thoſe whom God makes the Inſtruments of our Correction. *Wherefore doth a living Man complain?* Lam. iii. 39. *A Man, for the Puniſhment of his Sins? Let us ſearch and try our Ways, and turn again to the Lord.* For this is the Deſign of God, that we ſhould repent and turn from our Sins, and not murmur againſt him that afflicts us.

2. *Proſperity is dangerous to the Intereſt of our Souls.*

§. 3. The *ſecond* Head of Comfort is, To conſider *the End and Deſign of our Croſs*; namely, that God ſends it, not out of Hatred, but pure Love to our Souls. For how dangerous it is to a Man's Soul to be always Proſperous and at Eaſe, we may learn not only from the Story of the rich Glutton, (*Luk.* xvi. 25.) but alſo from the Example of our firſt Parents, whoſe Happineſs in Paradiſe being greater than they could bear, they were, by the Temptations of *Satan*, ſeduced from their Obedience and Dependence upon God, *Gen.* iii. 6. And every Day furniſhes us with freſh Inſtances of the Danger of that State. Now though God in ſtrict Juſtice might have condemned Mankind to everlaſting Puniſhment; yet He choſe rather to have pity on him, and put him into Methods of Recovering his loſt Happineſs; and one of theſe is the Croſs and Affliction. For this cauſe He drove him out of Paradiſe, that Gar-

Garden of Pleaſure, that in the *Sweat of his Brows he ſhould eat his Bread*, Gen. iii. 24. to the Intent, that by theſe Sufferings, he might be brought to Repentance; and this is his conſtant Method even to this Day. For though we offend Him every Day by innumerable Sins; yet, in his abundant Mercy, He leaves nothing undone, no means untried, that may contribute to our Converſion and Amendment. And this is the Reaſon why Providence appoints every particular Man his Croſs, that we may all be kept in the true State of Penitence, and the Fear of God unto eternal Life. Hence it is, that *Ecclus.* xxx. 1. *Prov.* iii. 11, 12. xiii. 24. *Heb.* xii. 6. 1 *Cor.* xi. 32. God is ſaid *to puniſh whomſoever he loveth, that they may not be condemned with the World.*

The Benefit of the Croſs.

§. 4. The *third* Argument is, *Sin it ſelf*, by conſidering whether thou haſt not deſerved thy Puniſhments: And if thou haſt, which thou canſt not deny, it is very agreeable to the Divine Juſtice, that thou ſhouldſt ſuffer. Now a *temporal* Suffering, attended with the Divine Mercy and Comfort, is certainly more deſireable than an eternal one, without hopes of Comfort, or expectation of Redemption. Call to mind the Story of the Glutton, in vain crying out, (*Luk.* xvi. 24.) *Have pity upon me!* and aſſure thy ſelf, it will be no ſmall Comfort to conſider, *that God has changed the Eternal Puniſhment threatned to our Sins, into a Temporal and tolerable Correction.*

3. *The Croſs is a certain Sign of the divine Love, which chaſtiſes us here, to ſave us eternally.*

§. 5. *Fourthly*, When thou art afflicted, conſider, *How much Chriſt ſuffered for thy ſake?* Think upon his Poverty, *who had not where to lay his Head*, Matt. viii. 20. Remember the Indignities He underwent, ſuch as no Man ever did or will endure: being made as it were, the *Filth and Offſcouring of all* Men, *Iſa.* liii. 3,

4. *Chriſt's Croſs makes ours eaſie.*

4. yea, *a very Worm, and no Man*, Pſal. xxii. 7. Moreover, as He took upon him the Miſeries, Pains, and Infirmities of all the World, hence it was that He underwent ſuch bitter Sufferings, ſuch dreadful Torments, that even the Sun and Moon were as it were amazed at the Sight, the Earth quaked, and the Rocks rent; all which, tho' for his moſt cruel Enemies, He bore with a Love ſo inexpreſſibly pure, with a Meekneſs and Patience ſo ſtupendious, that as *a Lamb, he opened not his Mouth.* Moreover, though we provoke Him every Day by moſt grievous Tranſgreſſions, yet He continues, and will ſtill continue Faithful, and ready to receive us to his Favour upon our Repentance, *Jer.* iii. 9. yea, and if the Ranſome He has already paid were not ſufficient, to lay down his Life again for our ſakes. Therefore He bears patiently with us, and waits Day and Night to be gracious For ſo ſtrong is the Flame of his Love towards us, that it cannot be quenched, by any Sin, any Ingratitude of ours, if we do but ſincerely repent of them.

§. 6. In a Word: his Love is higher than Heaven, deeper than the Sea, and exceeding even our moſt exalted Thoughts and Expreſſions. There is but one thing neceſſary on our Parts, but one only thing, that is, REPENTANCE. Therefore he calls upon all without diſtinction, *Matt.* xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that Travel and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you.* And Chap. xxiii. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thee!* Joh. vii. 37. *If any Man Thirſt, let him come unto me and drink.* By which Places of Holy Scripture, He does continually invite every one to come to him that ſtands in need of Mercy. How then canſt thou imagine that He will forſake thee in the Time of Trouble, who endured ſo many

and

and great Miſeries for thy ſake? 'Tis for this that He calls himſelf *our Father*, Matt. vi. 9. Eph. iii. 15. Now we know that a Father is more compaſſionate and tender than a Maſter. So that He would not have us dread Him as an Enemy, but love Him as a dutiful Child does an indulgent Father. When therefore any Affliction befalls thee, receive it cheerfully, and remember that thy Father ſends it to thee for good, and kiſs the Rod, and the Hand that holds it. Conſider the *Compaſſion of God*, as thy greateſt Security, the firm Foundation of all thy Hopes, firmly believing, that thy Heavenly Father will lay no more upon thee than He knows to be abſolutely neceſſary for the Salvation of thy Soul.

God's paternal Care makes our Croſs eaſie.

§. 7. *Fifthly*, We muſt call to mind the Promiſe of our Bleſſed Saviour, *Joh.* xvi. 20. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoice; and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy.* As a little Seed is multiplied into a Number of Grains, ſo one Affliction ſhall produce a large encreaſe of ſpiritual Joy and Glory. So *Pſal.* cxxvi. 5, 6. *They that ſow in Tears, ſhall reap in Joy. They that now go on their way Weeping, bearing forth good Seed, ſhall doubtleſs come again with joy, and bring their Sheaves with them.* Now, if God ſhould promiſe to tranſmute every Stone and Pebble about thy Houſe, into precious Stones, I doubt not but thou wouldeſt quickly make a large Collection. The Caſe of Croſſes and Afflictions is juſt the ſame, *Go then, and do thou likewiſe*; love them, yea, court them, knowing that God will aſſuredly convert them into Treaſures of Bleſſings, and ſpiritual Joys; according to that Saying of the Book of Wiſdom, Chap. v. 17. *They ſhall receive a glorious Kingdom, and a beautiful Crown from the Lord's Hand.* And

5. *The Promiſe of Chriſt.*

Rom.

Rom. viii. 18. *I reckon that the Sufferings of this preſent Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us.*

6. *The Examples of the Saints.*

§. 8. The *ſixth* Ground of Comfort is, *The Examples of the Saints*, none of whom were without their Croſs. Ask them one by one, and they will anſwer you, *Through many Tribulations we entred into the Kingdom of God*, Acts xiv. 22. Ask the Elders in the *Revelations*, and they will tell you, *Theſe are they that came out of great Tribulation*, Rev vii. 14. Enquire of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Joſeph*, *Moſes*, *Aaron*, *David*, *Daniel*, *Elias*, *Job*, and all the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, they will tell you, that they drank deep of the bitter Cup of Affliction, which was to them *the Cup of Salvation*, Pſal. cxvi. 12. Not to mention the holy *Martyrs*, whoſe Tortures and Sufferings, though terrible, and affrighting to think of, yet could not ſeparate them from the Love of God which is in *Chriſt Jeſus*. And what compariſon is there betwixt their Croſſes and our light Afflictions, *that have not yet reſiſted unto Blood*, Heb. xii. 4. We, forſooth, cannot bear a trivial Injury, or an affronting Expreſſion for *Chriſt*'s ſake, for whom the bleſſed Martyrs underwent the moſt ignominious Deaths. One was beheaded, another roaſted Alive, a third Crucified; ſome Drowned, ſome Stoned, others Hanged, others ſtruck through with Darts, others forced to walk barefooted upon red hot Plates of Iron. *The Love of Chriſt ſo ſwallowing up all Senſe of Pain, that they cried out, they were walking upon Roſes.*

Our Croſſes light in compariſon with that of the Martyrs.

7. *The Preſence of God.*

§. 9. The *ſeventh* Spring of Comfort is, *The Preſence of God with us under the Croſs.* God has no where declared, that He dwells with the Jovial and the Merry, but with the Afflicted and Sorrowful. *Iſa.* lvii. 15. *I dwell in the High and Holy Place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and*

and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones. Iſa. xli. 10. xliii. 2. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteouſneſs. When thou paſſeſt through the Waters, I will be with thee; and through the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee; when thou walkeſt through the Fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt: neither ſhall the Flame kindle upon thee.* Pſal xci. 14. *Becauſe he hath ſet his Love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will ſet him up becauſe he hath known my Name,* Pſal. xxxiv. 18. *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a contrite Heart, and will ſave ſuch as be of an humble Spirit.* It was this comfortable Preſence of God that enabled the bleſſed Martyrs to bear up ſo boldly under the heavy Torments that were laid upon them, and to laugh at their Tormentors: As did particularly St. *Lawrence* and St. *Vincent*, the latter of whom, walking upon burning Coals, told them, *He was walking upon a Bed of Roſes. Babylas* the Martyr deſired that the Chain wherewith he was bound, might be buried with him, that he might not be deprived of ſo great an Ornament. The bleſſed *Ignatius* wiſhed to be a Grain of Corn, and to be ground with the Teeth of wild Beaſts, that he might become clean Bread for his Saviour. Theſe are ſuch Inſtances of Courage and Greatneſs of Mind, as do utterly exceed the Powers of Nature, and are only owing to the Influences of that Heavenly Comforter, who ſupported St. *Stephen*, and made his Face glitter before the Counſel, as it had been *the Face of an Angel*, Acts vi. 15. And in this Senſe is that Place of the Pſalmiſt verified, *Pſal.* xciv. 19. *In the Multitude of the Sorrows that I had in my Heart, thy Comforts have refreſhed my Soul.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Motives to Patience, and the Benefit sof the Croſs.

JAM. v. 7.

Be patient Brethren, unto the Coming of the Lord. Behold, the Husbandman waiteth for the precious Fruit of the Earth, and hath long patience for it, till he receive the former and the latter Rain.

Patience, what it is.

§. 1. PATIENCE is that Virtue, by which we behave our ſelves quietly under any Croſs or Tribulation, committing our Selves and all our Concerns, whether Temporal or Eternal, without any reſerve, to be governed and diſpoſed of by the All-wiſe Providence of God, entirely reſigning all to his Will. To the Practice of which, the following Arguments do ſtrongly perſuade us.

Afflictions are from God.

§. 2. *Firſt*, Becauſe *every Croſs and Calamity of Life; as Sword, Famine, Peſtilence, and other Puniſhments, proceed from God.* Nothing happens in this World at random, or by chance, though by the Permiſſion of Providence, many Evils are inflicted by the Devil and his Inſtruments. Hence it is ſaid by the Prophet, *Iſa.* xlv. 7. *I form the Light, and create Darkneſs: I make Peace, and create Evil: I the Lord do all theſe Things.* And 1 *Sam.* ii. 6, *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up.* What canſt thou reply to all this, wilt thou be impatient, and like the Gyants of Old, fight againſt God?

§. 3.

§. 3. *Secondly*, We muſt remember that our Puniſhments are leſs than we deſerve. Our Sins are greater than our Puniſhments, and our Sufferings leſs than our Offences, as *Judith* generouſly acknowledged; yea, thou canſt not but own, that the Mercies thou haſt enjoyed from thy Youth up unto this Day, are more and greater than the Puniſhments thou haſt ſuffered. Why then ſhouldeſt thou not with profound Submiſſion, receive cheerfully the Corrections which He inflicts for thy Benefit, to ſave thee from Deſtruction? *Our Puniſhments leſs than we deſerve.*

§. 4. *Thirdly*, Now if we have many Ways provoked God, and deſerved Puniſhment, we muſt acknowledge with the Prophet *Daniel*, Chap. ix. 7. *That He is righteous in all that is brought upon us.* Canſt thou ſay it is unreaſonable that God ſhould puniſh thy Sins, either in this World or the next? And if this be allowed, why doſt thou not ſubmit cheerfully to the Divine Chaſtiſements, without murmuring or repining? For it is certainly better to be puniſhed now than hereafter, as St. *Paul* tells us, 1 Cor. xi. 32. *But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the World.* Whoſoever therefore is impatient, and murmurs againſt God, accuſes him of Injuſtice, and calls his Righteouſneſs in queſtion. *Pſal.* cxlv. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.* And *Pſal.* cxix. 137. *Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and juſt are thy Judgments.* *His Mercies greater than his Puniſhments.* *God is righteous in Puniſhing us.*

§. 5. *Fourthly*, Doth it not diſcover a ſtubborn and untractable Temper, to fly in the Face of God, *who has ſo long born with, and ſtill continues to bear with thee patiently*, as St. *Paul* ſays, ſpeaking of the *Goodneſs, Patience, and Long-ſuffering of God, by which he endeavours to draw us to Repentance.* See *Rom.* ii. 4. *Eph.* ii. 4. *God's Long-ſuffering.*

§. 6.

The Example of Christ.

§. 6. *Fifthly*, Set before thine Eyes the Example of thy Saviour. He who was the moſt ſpotleſs Innocence and Purity it ſelf, though He could have deſtroyed his Enemies in a Moment, yet bore their utmoſt Cruelties with Patience, and prayed for his Enemies. How much more reaſon then have we to be patient, who have deſerved the greateſt Puniſhments, even eternal Puniſhments. *As Jacob ſerved ſeven Years for Rachel*, (Gen. xxix. 18.) ſo *Chriſt*, for our ſakes, ſubmitted to the greateſt Miſeries of Life, for Three and Thirty Years. And is it not a Shame that we ſhould refuſe to ſuffer a ſhort Affliction for his ſake? Conſider the Patience of all the Saints, *Joſeph*, and *Moſes* who offered to lay down his Life for his People, *Exod.* xxxii. 32. Of *David*, who, 2 *Sam.* xv. 25. ſays, *If I ſhall find Favour in the Eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both it and his Habitation; but if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him.* As alſo of *Job*, with *the holy Apoſtles and Martyrs.*

The Benefits of God.

§. 7. *Sixthly*, Even the bare remembrance of God's Mercies ſhould move us to Patience. For firſt of all, thou art aſſured, that by *Chriſt* thou art reconciled unto God, and that no Man can rob thee of this tranſcendent Mercy, tho' the whole World ſhould league together againſt thee: *For the merciful Goodneſs of the Lord endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear him. Who can ſeparate us from the Love of God?* Rom. viii. 38, 39. Moreover, it is plain, that thou art redeemed by *Chriſt* unto everlaſting Life, which no Creature can take from thee. And if the Caſe be ſo, that the Love of God, and thy eternal Salvation, be firmly ſecured to thee; it will ſurely be eaſie for thee to deſpiſe the Threats and Promiſes of external

Ene-

Enemies, Tyrants, and Perſecutors, and like the bleſſed Martyrs of old, to be wholly regardleſs of what Man can do unto thee.

§. 8. The *Seventh* ſupport of Patience is, *The Truth and Promiſe of God.* Iſa. xxx. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have Mercy on you: For the Lord is a God of Judgment. Bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* The ſame we read, *Pſal.* xxv. 3. *Eccluſ.* ii. 12. *Lam.* iii. 25. *Jam.* i. 12. *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation, for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life.* *The Truth of God.*

§. 9. *Eighthly,* We ought to ſubmit to any thing for *the Glory of God.* Thus the *three Children* in the fiery Furnace; *Daniel* in the Lions Den; *Joſeph* in Priſon; *David* in Baniſhment, gave Glory to God by their patient Suffering. *God is glorified by our Croſſes.*

§. 10. *Ninthly*: For *our own Advantage.* For firſt of all, we learn many great and uſeful Leſſons under the Diſcipline of the Croſs; *Patience worketh Experience,* ſaith St. *Paul,* Rom. v. 4. *2dly,* Patience breaks the Violence of our Sufferings: Upon which account, our bleſſed Lord promiſes *reſt* to thoſe that bear his Yoak, *Matt.* xi. 29. On the other hand, Impatience diſquiets the Soul, adds Grief to our Trouble, and a Sting to our Wounds, and ſometimes caſts us into Deſtruction both of Body and Soul; an inſtance of which we have in the *Iſraelites,* who being impatient, and murmuring againſt God, were deſtroyed by fiery Serpents in the Wilderneſs. *Numb.* xxi. 6. *The Fruits of Patience.*

§. 11. *Tenthly,* Great is *the Reward of Patience.* So *Job* having been ſpoiled of all his Goods, was rewarded with a double Portion. Chap. xlii. 10. And this is meant in that Promiſe of our bleſſed Lord, *Matt.* v. 5. *Bleſſed are the Meek; for they ſhall inherit the Earth.* *The Advantage of it.*

And by consequence, Curſed are the Impatient, for they ſhall be diſinherited.

Patience makes every State of Life eaſie.

§. 12. *Eleventhly, Patience is a Virtue of unſpeakable Advantage to all Ranks and Orders of Men.* In Miniſters of the Goſpel it is a neceſſary Virtue, to be able to bear the Oppoſition, Contempt, and perhaps, Perſecution to which they may be expoſed by the conſcientious Diſcharge of their Duty. In Miniſters of State, it is an uſeful Virtue, to bear with Patience the Odium and Reproach that generally attends thoſe publick Stations. For Hiſtory informs us, that Impatience, and a deſire of Revenge, has been the Ruine of many flouriſhing States and Kingdoms. Then as to the Concerns of private Families, how neceſſary Patience is there, I appeal to every one's Experience, particularly to thoſe that are entred into the Marriage-State, in which reſpect, theſe Words of *Solomon* are moſt emphatically true, *Prov.* xvi. 32. *He that is ſlow to Anger, is better than the Mighty.*

Chriſt has made all our Croſſes ſalutary.

§. 13. *Twelfthly,* Conſider that it is the great Mercy of *Chriſt,* that He has taken out the Sting of our Afflictions, that they cannot hurt us with regard to our eternal Happineſs; for by his Croſs and Paſſion, He hath made an Atonement for our Sins, and has taken away the Edge of thoſe Puniſhments that were due to them. If then our Croſs be ſanctified by the Croſs of *Chriſt,* and is to us a Remedy againſt all our ſpiritual Diſeaſes, it follows, that the Croſs it ſelf is a Help to Salvation, which made the Apoſtle ſay, *Rom.* viii. 28. *All Things work together for good to them that love God.*

Temporal Croſſes are Arguments of God's Love.

§. 14. *Laſtly,* Conſider how light thy Afflictions are, if compared to *the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us,* Rom. viii. 18. Upon which account, the Love of God is ſtill more illuſtrious, that

that He is pleaſed to afflict us in this World. For the Duration of a Temporal Affliction, if compared to Eternity, is but for a Moment; on the other hand, the Joy that it produces laſts to Eternity. And if the Caſe be thus, I may boldly ſay, that we ought to wiſh and pray for Afflictions in this World, that we may have reſt in the other. I conclude this Chapter with that beautiful Paſſage of St. *Peter*, 1 Epiſt. ch. i. 6, 8. *Though now for a Seaſon ye are in Heavineſs, yet ye ſhall rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of Glory.*

The Benefits of the CROSS.

The CROSS is,

THE ſtrait and narrow Way leading to Life.

The Rod of Divine Correction, to awaken us from the Sleep of Sin and Death.

The Paternal Correction.

The Morning Star that uſhers in the Sun of Conſolation.

The Heavenly Bow, and Token of the Divine Favour.

That which brings us to a Conformity with CHRIST.

That which ſtrips us of the Armour of Darkneſs.

That which cloaths us with the Armour of Light.

A Balſamick Fruit.

The Incorruptible Myrrhe.

The Plant of Life.

A Reſtorative Potion.

The Cup of Salvation.
The Trial of Faith.
The Edification of our Neighbour.
The Mother of Love.
The Companion of Hope.
The Forerunner of Charity.
The Phyſick of the Soul.
The Preſervative againſt Sin.
The Deſtroyer of the carnal Life.
The Cheriſher of the ſpiritual Life.
The Change of the earthly Mind.
The Forſaking of the World.
The Procurer of Divine Favour.
The Increaſe of Heavenly Graces.
The Conqueror of Pride.
The Nurſe of Humility.
The Teacher of Patience.
The Renewer of the Spirit.
The Strengthner of Virtue.
The Diſcipline of the Body.
The Enlivener of the Mind.
The Mother of Wiſdom.
The Teacher of Meekneſs.
The Encourager of Prayer.
The Miſtreſs of Patience.
The Guardian of Chaſtity.
The Peace of the Conſcience.
The Spring of inward Joys.
A bright Carbuncle in the Golden Collars of the Saints.
The glittering Jewel of the Faithful.
The fragrant Roſe of Paradiſe.
The Crown of the Martyrs.
The Glory of the Elect.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Sentences and Examples to encourage us to Patience.

ACTS xiv. 22.

We muſt through many Tribulations enter into the Kingdom of God.

§. 1. AS the Life of a Chriſtian is nothing elſe but *Croſſes* and *Afflictions*, thro' which he muſt enter into the Kingdom of God; ſo he muſt arm himſelf with Patience, and beg it earneſtly of God. We muſt not think that we are born for Paſtime and Diverſion, but for many Afflictions and Trials of Patience. And upon this Head, we will conſider Three ſeveral Arguments. *The Firſt* ſhall contain ſome ſelect Sentences and Teſtimonies of Scripture. *The Second*, Examples. And, *The Third*, Encouragements.

I. *Some Sentences and Teſtimonies of Scripture.*

§. 2. Patience is a Vertue, which with Meekneſs, Quietneſs, and Humility, ſubmits it ſelf to the Croſs; receiving all Kinds of Afflictions, Calamities, and Perſecutions, whether Corporal or Spiritual, as the Croſs and Yoak of *Chriſt*; by this we follow our Bleſſed Saviour, not murmuring againſt God, but acknowledging in Faith, that God is reconciled to us thro' *Chriſt*, and comforting our Selves under the ſevereſt Trials, with the Hopes of Deliverance. This is alſo called *Meekneſs* towards them that *Patience, what it is.*

injure and perſecute us, leaving the Avenging of our Quarrel to God, not upon a Principle of Reaſon or worldly Policy, but ariſing from the Grace of God, as the Fruit and Effect of true Faith.

§. 3. The Parts of this Definition are, (1.) Obedience. (2.) Imitation. (3.) Not to Repine. (4.) To conſider God as Reconciled to us through *Chriſt*. (5.) To leſſen our Afflictions by Hope. (6.) To behave our Selves with Meekneſs towards our Perſecutors. (7.) Not to exerciſe Revenge. And ſo it contains in it, Faith, Hope, Charity, Humility, Meekneſs, and Obedience.

§. 4. Theſe Virtues are to be practiſed and exerciſed by all the Diſciples of *Chriſt*, who are redeemed to the Hopes of Heaven and Eternal Life. For againſt ſuch *the Devil, that great Dragon and old Serpent*, yea, and the whole World, are fighting continually. Hence it is ſaid, *Rev.* xii. 17. *The Dragon was wroth with the Woman, and went to make War with the Remnant of her Seed, which kept the Commandments of God, and have the Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.* To which alſo may be referred,

§. 5. Matt. xvi. 24. *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me: For whoſoever will ſave his Life, ſhall loſe it; but whoſoever will loſe his Life for my ſake, ſhall find it*: i. e. Whoſoever ſhall refuſe to bear the Croſs for *Chriſt*'s ſake, ſhall be deſtroyed Body and Soul. *Mark* xiii. 13. *And ye ſhall be hated of all Men, for my Names ſake.* This is indeed an heavy Croſs, to be hated of all Men, but for *Chriſt*'s ſake it may be eaſily born.

§. 6. Concerning Spiritual Perſecutions, our Bleſſed Saviour Propheſies, *Luk.* xxi. 12, 19. *They ſhall lay their Hands on you, and perſecute you. Delivering you up to the Synagogues, and into Priſon,*

ſon, being brought before Kings and Rulers for my Names ſake: In your Patience poſſeſs ye your Souls. Joh. xv. 18, 19, 20. *If the World hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the World, the World would love its own; but becauſe ye are not of the World, but I have taken you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you.* Joh. xvi. 2. *They ſhall put you out of the Synagogues, yea, the Time cometh, when whoſoever killeth you, ſhall think that he doth God Service.*

§. 7. When St. *Paul* had been ſtoned by the Rabble at *Lyſtra*, but encouraged by the Diſcourſes of the Diſciples; *He confirmed the Souls of the Diſciples, and exhorted them to continue in the Faith: and that we muſt through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.* 2 Cor. iv. 8. *We are troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed: We are perplexed, but not in Deſpair: Perſecuted, but not forſaken: Caſt down, but not deſtroyed: Always bearing about in the Body the Dying of the Lord Jeſus, that the Life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our Body.* 2 Tim. ii. 3, 5, 12. *Thou therefore endure hardneſs, as a good Soldier of Chriſt. If a Man ſtrive for Maſtery, he is not crowned, except he ſtrive lawfully. If we Suffer, we ſhall alſo Reign with him.* Chap. iii. 12. *All that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer Perſecution.* Heb. x. 36. *Ye have need of Patience, that after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promiſe.*

§. 8. Heb. xii. 1, 2, 3. *Let us run with Patience the Race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith; who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is ſet down at the right Hand of the Throne of God. For conſider Him that endured ſuch contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in your Minds.* 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. *Now for a Seaſon ye are*

in Heavineſs through manifold Temptations. That the Trial of your Faith may be found much more Precious than of Gold that periſheth. Rev. iii. 10. *Becauſe thou haſt kept the Word of my Patience, I alſo will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which ſhall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth.* Ch. ii. 10. *Be faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

II. *EXAMPLES.*

Abraham. *Abraham* ſuffered many Things from the *Chaldeans*, *Cananites*, and *Egyptians*. Acts vii. 4, 5, 6. *Then came he out of the Land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Charran. And He gave him no Inheritance in it, no, not ſo much as to ſet his Foot on. And God ſpake on this wiſe, That his Seed ſhould ſojourn in a ſtrange Land, and that they ſhould bring them into bondage, and entreat them Evil* 400 *Years.* Heb. xi. 8, 9. *By Faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a Place which he ſhould afterwards receive for an Inheritance, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went. By Faith he ſojourned in the Land of Promiſe, as in a ſtrange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles, for he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whoſe Maker and Builder is God.*

Lot. §. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 7, 9. *He delivered juſt Lot, vexed with the filthy Converſation of the Wicked. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation, and to reſerve the Unjuſt unto the Day of Judgment to be puniſhed.*

Iſaac. *Iſaac* refuſed not to be offered up for a burnt Sacrifice, *Gen.* xxii. 9.

Jacob. *Jacob* alſo had a great Share of Suffering. He fled from his Brother *Eſau*, paſſing over *Jordan* with his Staff. *Gen.* xxxii. 10. *By his Strength*

Strength he had power with God, yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed, he wept and made Supplication unto him. Yet he ſaith unto *Pharaoh*, Gen. xlvii. 9. *The Days of the Years of my Pilgrimage are an Hundred and thirty Years; few and evil.*

Jam. v. 11. *Ye have heard of the Patience of Job, and have ſeen the End of the Lord.* Job.

Moſes was Meek, and afflicted above all the Men that were upon the Face of the Earth. Yet he *choſe rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin for a Seaſon*, Heb. xi. 25. Moſes.

How many Afflictions did *David* ſuffer, who was a Type and Figure of *Chriſt*? *O Lord my God, in thee have I put my Truſt; ſave me from all them that perſecute me*, Pſal. vii. 1. *The Lord hath heard the deſire of the Poor*, Pſal. x. 17. David.

Solomon's Motto was, *Prov.* xv. 33. *The Fear of the Lord is the Inſtruction of Wiſdom, and before* (the) *Honour* (of the next World) *is Humility.* Ecclus. ii. 1. *My Son, if thou come to ſerve the Lord, prepare thy Soul for Temptation.* I ſpeak not here of the Three Heroes in the fiery Furnace, *Dan.* iii. 21. nor of the Apoſtles and Martyrs. Solomon.

§. 10. The Exemplary Patience of CHRIST exceeds them all. (1.) Becauſe He was moſt Obedient upon the Croſs. (2.) Becauſe He murmured not againſt God, as did *Moſes*, *Job*, and *Jeremiah*. (3.) Becauſe He held faſt his Confidence in God, and called Him *his God*, though He were forſaken by Him. (4.) Becauſe He heartily prayed for his Enemies; and revenged not himſelf when it was in his Power.

III;

III. *CONSOLATIONS.*

Matt. v. 4. *Bleſſed are they that Mourn; for they ſhall be Comforted.* Chap. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are heavy Laden, and I will refreſh you.* In which Words is included a five-fold Conſolation. (1.) That the Afflicted may come to CHRIST. (2.) May be Refreſhed. (3.) May take up his Yoak. (4.) May find reſt to their Souls. (5.) That his Yoak is eaſie. For when it is born for *Chriſt*'s ſake, it is not burdenſome, but refreſhing. Hence St. *Paul* ſaith, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. *We glory in Tribulations, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, and Hope maketh not aſhamed: becauſe the Love of God is ſhed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghoſt.* Jam. i. 12. *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation, for when he is tried, he ſhall receive a Crown of Life, which God hath promiſed to them that Love Him.* Rom. viii. 35. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of God? All Things work together for good to them that love God.* Joh. xvi. 23. *In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.* 2 Tim. iv. 17. *I have fought a good Fight.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

There is no Affliction befals us, for which God has not provided ſuitable Conſolations: Yea, that the Supports He affords us are greater than the Burdens He lays upon us.

1 COR. x. 13.

GOD is Faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.

THE Bleſſed Apoſtle St. *Paul*, Meditating upon the tender Mercies and Compaſſions of our Heavenly Father, to all Afflicted and Contrite Sinners, breaks out into theſe Words, full of Divine Joy and Thankſgiving: *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort; who comforteth us in all our Tribulation, that we may be able to comfort thoſe that are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God. For as the Sufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our Conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt. —knowing that as you are partakers of the Sufferings, ſo ſhall ye be alſo of the Conſolation*, 2 Cor. i. 3, *&c.* *The Cure of our Miſery.*

§. 2. In theſe Words, full of divine Sweetneſs, the holy Apoſtle gives thanks to God for Heavenly Conſolation, which is indeed the only *Remedy* againſt all the Troubles and Adverſities which oppreſs us in this Life; inſinuating withal, that no Adverſity does befal us, how great ſoever, but God ſupports us under it by his Divine Comfort, which is generally more abundant than our Sufferings; which he confirms by Seven weighty Arguments, which he repeats in their Order. *Seven ſprings of Conſolation.*

§. 3.

1. *God is our Father.*

§. 3. *The First* is, because God is *the Father of Mercies*, which is the most comfortable Apellation that can be conceived. For he shows himself a Father, not only in Name, but in Sincerity and Truth to all afflicted Souls. Do but consider what are the *Properties* of a Father, that they all in the most proper Sense belong to God our Heavenly Father. It is the Part of a Father, (1.) To Love his Children. (2.) To take Care of them. (3.) To Feed them. (4.) To defend them. (5.) To Correct and Instruct them. (6.) To pity their Infirmities. (7.) To be Tender of them. (8.) To give them Portions. All which Particulars, if a Man will but throughly consider, he must acknowledge, that the very Name of a *Father* does carry in it such a Treasure of Comfort, as does abundantly outweigh all the Miseries of Humane Life. And to illustrate this yet more perfectly, St. *Paul*, by a most significant Epithet, calls Him, *The Father of Mercies*; i. e. the eternal Fountain of all that Tenderness and Affection that is diffused through the Hearts of so many Thousand Fathers. Hence it follows, that no Cross can befal the Children of God so great, as is the Comfort that arises from the *Father of Mercies*.

The Properties of a Father.

2. *The God of Comfort.*

§. 4. The *Second* Argument is contained in this Expression, *The God of all Comfort*. Because, as is aforesaid, He overflows with eternal and infinite Comforts. For as God is the eternal, infinite, and chiefest Good; and on the other hand, our Crosses are finite and temporal, what else can proceed from that eternal and chiefest Good, but a perpetual Spring of Comfort, not only equal, but superior to our greatest Affliction? For as our Miseries are finite, and the Consolations of God are infinite, it cleary follows, that the latter must be superior to the former.

§. 5.

§. 5. The *Third* Argument is, *The Example of St. Paul*, and all the Saints. *God* (ſaith he) *comforteth us in all our Tribulation.* If we but read the Hiſtories of the Saints, and compare their Trials and Afflictions, with the Divine Conſolations wherewith they were ſupported under them, we ſhall eaſily perceive that our Afflictions are but light, in Compariſon with their Torments; and that no Croſs can befal us ſo great, as to exceed thoſe divine Comforts and Supports which the holy Martyrs enjoyed. Who will preſume to compare his Croſſes with thoſe of holy *Job*? Who can ſay he has been afflicted like *Jeremiah*? Chap. xx. 7. Or tried like *David*? And what is our Croſs, to that of *Chriſt*? Or our Sufferings, to the Torments of the holy Martyrs? Whoſe Examples, as they were the Children of God, our Heavenly Father has ſet before our Eyes, to teach us, (1) That the Croſs is the Sanctuary and Myſtery of the true Chriſtian. (2.) His Heavenly and Spiritual Glory. (3.) His Victory over the World and the Devil. (4.) His Preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven. (5.) That without the Croſs no Man can enter into the Kingdom of God. (6.) That the Croſs is the Image of *Chriſt*. (7.) That it is an exalted and ſublime Myſtery, in which lies hid the higheſt Wiſdom and Providence of God. But as Fleſh and Blood cannot comprehend this, ſo neither can it taſt the Heavenly Manna hidden in the Word of God, but by the Croſs. Hence alſo it follows, that the Divine Comforts are greater than any Humane Sufferings.

3. *The Examples of the Saints.*

§. 6. The *Fourth* is expreſſed in theſe Words, *That we may be able to comfort thoſe that are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we our Selves are comforted of God.* Now, how did God comfort the Apoſtles? And how do they com-

4. *The Promiſes.*

fort

fort us again? Certainly by the gracious Promiſes in his holy Word. Hence it is ſaid, *Rom.* xv. 4. *Whatſoever things were written, were written for our Learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* Now whoſoever reads the Word of God as he ought, muſt needs obſerve how familiarly God vouchſafes to treat with us, what abundance of Grace, how many ſpiritual and eternal Bleſſings He promiſes to beſtow upon us: So that we muſt needs confeſs, that this one Comfort is enough to outweigh all the Sufferings of Humane Life. For though the Son of *Sirach* truly ſays of this troubleſome World, Chap. xl. 1. *That all the Sons of Adam, from the Day they come out of their Mothers Womb, find it full of Trouble and Unquietneſs, Fear, Anger, and Strife.* Yet if to this State of Trouble and Miſery, we oppoſe the Glories of the Eternal Kingdom, (2 *Cor.* xiv. 17.) it will appear, that the Joys of the next Life, promiſed in the Word of God, are vaſtly ſuperior to the Miſeries of this.

This Life is nothing to Eternity.

§. 7. It is in like manner true, that *Sin* is a very great and dreadful Evil, daily encompaſſing us about, and involving us in innumerable Miſeries. Yet if we do but call to mind, that *Chriſt* is our Righteouſneſs, it will thence follow, that the Burden of Sin which lies upon us, is much leſs than our ſpiritual Strength which is in *Chriſt Jeſus*. For greater is the Righteouſneſs which is in *Chriſt*, than the Sin which is in *us*. In ſhort, the Word of God does ſo abound and overflow with Heavenly Conſolations, that the Heart of Man is too narrow to receive them. It is like the Cruſe of Oil mentioned 2 *Kings* iv. 6. which, by the Bleſſing of *Eliſha*, produced more Oil than they had Veſſels to receive. Yea, it often happens,

pens, that one ſingle Word of holy Scripture, can comfort a Man more, than the whole World, yea, than the Devil himſelf can diſtreſs him. *The River of God is full of Water*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. lxv. 10. ſo full, that no Man can draw it dry. It is not without Cauſe, that God calls himſelf, *Jer.* ii. 13. *The Fountain of living Waters.* And ſo *Pſal.* xxxvi. 10. *With thee is the Well of Life, and in thy Light ſhall we ſee Light.* And who can be ſo fooliſh as to think, that the Fountain of Sin and Death doth more abound with Affliction, than the Fountain of Life doth with Comforts?

Chriſt the Fountain of Life.

§. 8. *The fifth* Ground of Comfort is that the Apoſtle calls the Croſs of the Faithful, *the Croſs of Chriſt.* And that (1.) becauſe all the Faithful are the ſpiritual Members of the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt.* And as the Head feels all the Pains of every Member of the Body by a certain Sympathy ariſing from its union with them; ſo *Chriſt*, who is our ſpiritual Head, feels all the Croſſes and Sufferings of every Member. (2.) Becauſe *Chriſt* dwells in his faithful Servants, and is vitally united to them; therefore alſo He ſuffers in his Members, ſharing in all their Sufferings, Baniſhments, and Perſecutions; as He witneſſed by a Voice from Heaven, *Saul, Saul, Why perſecuteſt thou me?* Acts ix. 4. (3.) Becauſe we are regenerated by *Chriſt*, and He is *our everlaſting Father*, Iſai. ix. 6. Now we know, that the Heart of a Father has a very tender Senſe of the Sufferings of his Child. And if it be ſo, canſt thou think any Affliction ſo great that it cannot be made eaſie and tolerable by this Conſideration, that *Chriſt* is thy Head, and thou art his Member? That He is united to thee, dwells in thee, and ſuffers in thee, regarding all thy Sufferings as his own; that He is thy Father, and feels in himſelf all

5. *The Croſs of good Men is the Croſs of Chriſt.*

the

the Croſſes, Pains and Afflictions that are laid upon thee?

6. *Jeſus Chriſt our Comforter.*

§. 9. The *ſixth* Ground of Conſolation, the Apoſtle deduces *from Jeſus Chriſt, the Spring and Foundation of all Comfort*, in theſe Words; *Our Conſolation aboundeth through Chriſt.* For as Sin is the Fountain of all Miſery; ſo is *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Son of God, the Spring and Foundation of all Joy and Comfort. Now as the Power of *Chriſt* is greater than the Power of Sin, ſo is the Comfort that procedeth from Him greater and more powerful than any Miſery that can ariſe from Sin; according to that of St. *Paul*, Rom. v. 20. *Where Sin hath abounded, there Grace doth much more abound. For ſo it pleaſed God the Father, that in Him* (i. e. God the Son) *ſhould all Fulneſs dwell*, Col. i. 19. Whom therefore the Prophet *Iſaiah*, Chap. lxi. 1. mentions as ſent from God *to comfort all that mourn.* Whence it follows, that the Comforts ariſing from the Croſs of *Chriſt*, are greater than any Croſſes we can ſuffer of our own.

7. *The Glory of Chriſt, is the Glory of all the Faithful.*

§. 10. The *ſeventh* Comfort which the Apoſtle mentions, is *the Glory of Chriſt*: Hence He ſays, *As ye are partakers of his Sufferings, ſo ſhall ye be alſo of his Conſolations.* And this we know to be ſo great, that He is glorious, not only with reſpect to his own Perſon, in a manner incommunicable to his myſtical Body; but alſo that He, as the Head of the Church, was exalted to Glory for that very end, that all the Members of his myſtical Body might be partakers with Him. Hence St. *Paul* calls Him, *The Head of the Church which is his Body, the Fulneſs of Him that filleth all in all*, Eph. i. 22, 23. And now what Calamity, what Croſs, what Affliction can be ſo bitter, as not to be ſweetned by the Conſolation ariſing from the Glory of *Chriſt*? Wherefore St. *Paul*, Rom. viii. 18.

doth

doth *not think the Sufferings of this mortal Life worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us.* It now remains that we ſpeak of the *five Means*, by which we may be partakers of theſe Comforts.

§. 11. The *firſt* is, *True Repentance and Confeſſion of Sin.* For without this, the Soul is not capable of Comfort; according to that Saying of *Chriſt*, *They that are whole have no need of a Phyſician, but they that are Sick*, Matt. ix. 12. On the other hand, a Soul that is under a true Senſe of Sin, has a real Sight of the many Miſeries and Calamities into which it has caſt him, and therefore murmurs not againſt God, but abhors it ſelf and its own Iniquities, *Lam.* iii. 39. and confeſſes that God is juſt in all that He has brought upon it. For as Sin, like an epidemical Contagion, has infected the whole Maſs of Mankind; ſo alſo the Sentence of Miſery and Affliction in this mortal State, has paſſed upon all, for that all have ſinned. And whoever, like the Prophet *Daniel*, Chap. ix. 7, 16. confeſſes his Sin, ſhall find a Stream of Conſolation deſcending upon him from Heaven, as the Angel did to the Prophet, *ver.* 21.

Without Confeſſion of Sin is no Remiſſion.

§. 12. The *ſecond* Means, is *Faith*, which hangs upon *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the Infant doth upon the Mother's Breaſts. It reſts entirely in the Paternal Affection of the God of all Conſolation. It holds faſt by *Jeſus Chriſt*, as *Jacob* did by the Angel, *Gen.* xxxii. 26. ſaying, *I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.* This is that which in *Chriſt Jeſus* overcometh Sin, Death, the World, the Devil, and all its Enemies. *For all Things are poſſible to him that believeth*, Mark xi. 23. And *he that believeth ſhall ſee the Glory of God*, Joh. xi. 40.

Faith lays hold on the Bleſſing.

No Comfort without Prayer.

§. 13. The *third* Means, is *Prayer*, which is nothing but a divine Converſe with God. For as it is a great Eaſe and Refreſhment to an afflicted Soul, to communicate its Sorrows and Troubles to a faithful Friend: So are our Hearts pacified, refreſhed, and comforted, by pouring them out before God in Prayer, *Pſal.* cxxxviii. 3. *When I called upon Thee, thou heardeſt me, and renewedſt my Soul with much Strength.* Prayer offered up in the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is like *Jacob*'s Ladder, on which the Soul aſcends from Earth to Heaven; and ſo ſoon as the Prayer aſcends, the Angel of divine Conſolation deſcends back with it. Thus it was in the Agony of our Bleſſed Lord, who when *He prayed more earneſtly*, lo! an Angel deſcended from Heaven to ſtrengthen Him. And we may aſſure our Selves, that whenſoever we pray according to his Will, we ſhall be ſtrengthened according to his Promiſe.

Comfort from Praiſing God.

§. 14. The *fourth* Means of obtaining divine Conſolation is, *Praiſing God*, which is always attended with Comfort and ſpiritual Joy. He that is daily employed in the Praiſes of God, lives the Life of an Angel; for they, we know, do continually *behold the Face of their Heavenly Father*, (Matt. xviii. 10.) and ſing his Praiſes. This is the higheſt Joy, this is the Bread of Angels. Whence it appears, that praiſing and glorifying God muſt afford the moſt ſublime Pleaſure, the moſt exalted Joy to a devout Soul. Hence ſays *David*, Pſal. xxxiv. 1, 2. *I will always give thanks unto the Lord: his Praiſe ſhall ever be in my Mouth. My Soul ſhall make her boaſt in the Lord; the humble ſhall hear thereof and be glad.* In which Place, the Prophet joins the *Praiſe of God* and Spiritual *Joy* together, teaching us thereby, that the one is the Fruit of the other.

§. 15.

§. 15. The laſt ſure and certain Means of receiving divine Conſolation, is a diligent *Reading, Hearing, and Meditating on the Word of God. For whatſoever things are written, are written for our Inſtruction, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope,* Rom. xv. 4. For from the Word of God, as the true and only Fountain of Conſolation, are to be drawn all the abovementioned Arguments and grounds of Comfort; namely, joy and quiet of Mind under all Kinds of Croſſes and Afflictions. Hence alſo we muſt learn how theſe Comforts are to be obtained; *viz.* by true Repentance, ſolid Faith, ardent Prayer, and continual Praiſing God. *True Comfort from the Word of God.*

CHAP. XLI.

That the Truth of God and the Certainty of his Promiſes, ought to diſpoſe us to Patience.

MICH. vii. 7, *&c.*

Therefore I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my Salvation: My God will hear me. Rejoice not againſt me, O mine Enemy: When I fall, I ſhall ariſe; when I ſit in Darkneſs, the Lord ſhall be a Light unto me. I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt Him, until He plead my Cauſe, and execute Judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the Light, and I ſhall behold his Righteouſneſs. Then ſhe that is mine Enemy ſhall ſee it, and ſhame ſhall cover her which ſaid unto me, Where is the Lord thy God?

WE read in the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Chap. ix. 4. — that before the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and the Deſtruction of the Temple, beſides the Idolatry that brought that deſolation upon them, *Treachery*, *Lying*, *Falſhood*, *Hatred*, and *Envy* prevailed to a high Degree; and that Charity was quite cold and dead amongſt them. And whereſoever theſe Abominations are, there, it is plain, God is not; and that He has not ſo much forſaken a City or Kingdom, as the Hearts of thoſe that dwell therein; and when God forſakes us, Deſtruction quickly finds us. So ſays the Prophet; *Take ye heed every one of his Neighbour, and truſt ye not in any*

God is Love, and where there is no Love, there God cannot be.

And when God has forſaken us, deſtruction overtakes us.

any Brother: for every Brother will utterly ſupplant, and every Neighbour will walk with Slanders. They weary themſelves to commit Iniquity. Their Tongue is as an Arrow ſhot out, it ſpeaketh deceit; one ſpeaketh peaceably to his Neighbour with his Mouth, but in Heart he layeth wait. Here we may ſee the wretched State of that City, and what flagrant Iniquities they were that haſtened its Ruine. Treachery and Iniquity did ſo abound, that there was neither Truth nor Honeſty left. All their aim was to cheat and defraud one another; and their Hearts being thus ſet upon Iniquity, they were deſcending by haſty Steps into the Pit of Deſtruction.

§. 2. Something like this, is the Complaint of the Prophet *Micah*, Chap.vii.1. *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the Summer-fruits, as the Grape-gleanings of the Vintage; there is no cluſter to eat: my Soul deſired the firſt ripe Fruit. The good Man is periſhed out of the Earth; and there is none upright among Men: they all lie in wait for Blood. They do evil with both Hands earneſtly. Truſt ye not in a Friend.* And when a People or Nation are come to this paſs, they are induſtriouſly digging a Pit, into which they deſign to ruſh boldly, and with their Eyes open. And would to God this were not the State of our own Times! But as we too deeply ſhare in their Guilt, ſo we muſt expect to ſhare in their Puniſhments. For our Deſtruction is of our Selves. O that we could at laſt come to our Selves, renounce our paſt Errors, put off our carnal Minds that are at enmity againſt God, and love the Truth and Peace; if we do not, we are condemned already, and vengeance will quickly overtake us. *The Deſtruction of the City.*

§. 3. But that upright and good Men may not be too much terrified and diſcouraged in this diſmal and dangerous State of Things; we

muſt conſider, by what means the holy Men of Old did ſupport themſelves in ſuch a State of univerſal Corruption. The Prophet *Micah* pointing out, as it were with his Finger, the Fountain of true Conſolation, ſays, Chap. vii. 7. *Therefore I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my Salvation.* That is his *firſt* Comfort. The *ſecond* is, *My God ſhall hear me.* The *third* is, *Rejoice not againſt me, O mine enemy. When I fall, I ſhall ariſe.* The *fourth* is, *When I ſit in Darkneſs, the Lord ſhall be a Light unto me.* The *fifth* is, *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt Him; till He plead my Cauſe, and execute judgment for me.* The *ſixth* is, *He ſhall bring me forth to the Light, and I ſhall behold his Righteouſneſs.* The *ſeventh* is, *Then ſhe that is mine enemy ſhall ſee it, and ſhame ſhall cover her.*

The Object of our Faith and Hope, is the Divine Omnipotence and Mercy.

§. 4. *Firſt*, he ſays, *I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my Salvation.* In theſe Words is contained the Doctrine *of Faith and Hope*, which are as it were the two watchful, never-ſleeping Eyes of the Soul, by which it conſtantly looks towards God in the greateſt Dangers and Neceſſities; and the greater the Calamity is, the ſtronger ought to be our Faith, the more vigorous our Hope. Then it is that we ſhould call to mind the Words which we repeat at the beginning of the Apoſtles Creed: *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth*; i. e. I believe that there is no Miſery or Calamity ſo great, but God can and will deliver me out of it. Let us learn therefore to turn away our Eyes from any temporal Suffering, not regarding it, but God that made us, and who alone can and will deliver us out of it; according to Pſal. cxxiii. 1. *Unto thee lift I up mine Eyes: O thou that dwelleſt in the Heavens. Behold, even as the Eyes of Servants*

vants look unto the Hand of their Maſters, and as the Eyes of a Maiden unto the Hand of her Miſtreſs: Even ſo our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have Mercy upon us. Have Mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are utterly deſpiſed. Our Soul is filled with the ſcornful Reproof of the Wealthy, and with the Deſpitefulneſs of the Proud.

Faith, Hope, and Patience, depend on each other.

§. 5. Moreover, as it is generally the Way of Providence, to help us not at the Time appointed by us, but in his own due Time; ſo it is not enough for us to ſay, *I will look unto the Lord*; but we muſt add, *and wait for the God of my Salvation.* For Faith, Hope, and Patience, have an entire relation, and mutual dependence upon each other, as we may ſee, *Pſal.* xxvii. 1. In the beginning of which, *David* looks up to God, ſaying, *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom then ſhall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom then ſhall I be afraid?* And concludes his Prayer with theſe Words, ver. 15. *I verily believe to ſee the Goodneſs of the Lord in the Land of the Living. Tarry thou the Lord's leiſure, be ſtrong, and He ſhall comfort thine Heart, and put thou thy Truſt in the Lord.* So Pſal. cxxx. *I look for the Lord, my Soul doth wait for him; in his Word is my Truſt. My Soul fleeth unto the Lord before the Morning Watch, I ſay, before the Morning Watch.* Hab. ii. 3. *For the Viſion is yet for an appointed Time, in the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry.* But if the faithful Soul ſhall ſay: *Alas, I have waited a great while, and all in vain!* let her know, that it is neceſſary it ſhould be ſo, that her *Faith, Hope,* and *Patience,* may be tried and approved in the Sight of God. We never pleaſe God more, than when with Patience and Humility we wait for the Ac-

Faith, Hope, and Patience, pleaſe God.

compliſhment of his Promiſes; and receive with Submiſſion all his determinations concerning us.

§. 6. Add to this, that as every thing has a certain Beginning, ſo has every thing an appointed End; and whoſoever does not wait for that, labours in vain. As the Corn is expoſed to all the Viciſſitudes of Wind and Weather, before it comes to maturity; and whenever it comes to be ripe, is the ſweeter and better upon that account: Juſt ſo it is with the Croſs: He that bears it with Patience, and waits for the End of it, ſhall reap *the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs*, Heb. xii. 11. For St. *Paul* affirms, *Rom.* v. 5. *Hope maketh not aſhamed.* For when it is founded upon the Divine Grace, as upon a firm Rock, it continues immoveable in any Adverſity. Hence it is ſaid, *Pſal.* xxv. 2. *All they that hope in thee, ſhall not be aſhamed.* Pſal. xxxiv. 5. *They had an eye unto him and were lightened, and their Faces were not aſhamed.* Pſal. xxxi. 1. *In thee, O Lord, have I put my Truſt, let me never be put to confuſion.* Ecclus. ii. 10. *Did ever any truſt in the Lord, and was confounded? Or did any abide in his Fear, and was forſaken? Or whom did he ever deſpiſe, that called upon him? For the Lord is full of Compaſſion and Mercy, long-ſuffering, and very pitiful, and forgiveth Sin, and ſaveth in time of Affliction.* Pſal. ix. 19. *The patient abiding of the Meek ſhall not periſh for ever.*

God certainly hears our Prayers.

§. 7. The *ſecond* Conſolation is, that God will certainly hear our Prayers: *My God ſhall hear me.* Pſal. vi. 9, 10. *The Lord hath heard the Voice of my Weeping, the Lord hath heard my Petition, the Lord ſhall receive my Prayer.* Pſal. xviii. 5. *In my trouble I will call upon the Lord, and complain unto my God. So ſhall he hear my Voice out of his holy Temple; and my Complaint ſhall*

ſhall come before him, it ſhall enter even into his Ears. Pſal. xxxiv. 7, 16. *This poor Man cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his Troubles. The Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Prayers.* Pſal. xci. 14, 15. *Becauſe he hath ſet his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will ſet him up, becauſe he hath known my Name. He ſhall call upon me, and I will hear him: yea, I am with him in Trouble, I will deliver him, and bring him to Honour.* Pſal. lxv. 2, 5. *O thou that heareſt Prayer, unto thee ſhall all Fleſh come. Thou ſhalt ſhew us wonderful things, O God of our Salvation, Thou that art the Hope of all the Ends of the Earth, and of them that remain in the broad Sea.* But if thou ſhalt ſay in thine Heart: All theſe indeed were Men eminent for Holineſs, Faith, and Dependence upon God; but as for me, I am not worthy to be compared with them. I anſwer out of *Rom.* iii. 23. *All have ſinned, and come ſhort of the Glory of God*; but are heard and accepted through Grace, by Repentance and Faith. *Pſal.* cxlv. 18, 19. *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, yea, all ſuch as call upon him faithfully. He will fulfil the Deſire of them that fear him, He alſo will hear their cry, and will help them.* Pſal. cii. 18. *He turneth him unto the Prayer of the poor Deſtitute, and deſpiſeth not their deſire: This ſhall be written for thoſe that come after.*

§. 8. The *third* Conſolation is contained in theſe Words; *Rejoice not againſt me, O mine Enemy. When I fall, I ſhall ariſe.* Though the World, according to the perverſe Spirit that rules it, rejoice at the Sufferings of good Men, (*Joh.* xvi. 20.) yet ſhall they at laſt be confounded, and the Righteous comforted. Hence we are told: *Lam.* iii. 31, 32, 33. *The Lord will*

will not caſt off for ever. But though he cauſe Grief, yet will he have Compaſſion, according to the Multitude of his Mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men. 1 Cor. x. 13. *He is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the Temptation alſo make a Way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* The ſame God that laid the Burden on you, will in due Time take it off, comfort you, and deliver you from Death. *Pſal.* xxx. 12. *Thou haſt turned my Heavineſs into joy: thou haſt put off my Sackcloth, and girded me with Gladneſs.* Pſal. cxlv. 14. *The Lord upholdeth all ſuch as fall, and lifteth up all thoſe that are down.* Iſa. liv. 8. *In a little Wrath, I hid my Face from thee for a Moment; but with everlaſting Kindneſs will I have mercy on thee, ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer.* Lam. iii. 22. *It is of the Lord's Mercy that we are not conſumed, becauſe his Compaſſions fail not. They are new every Morning.*

God ſheds forth his Light in our Darkneſs.

The *fourth* Conſolation is contained in theſe Words: *When I ſit in Darkneſs, the Lord ſhall be a Light unto me.* By *Darkneſs*, he means a State of Affliction, which is Darkneſs indeed, ſo gloomy, that a Man can neither ſee nor be ſeen by his Friends without the leaſt Glympſe of wordly Comfort. Where a Man ſits in the very Region of Shame and Sorrow, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, expoſed to the Violence and Aſſaults of wild Beaſts, Bears, Lions, evil Spirits, and wicked Men. But dark and diſmal as it is, the Lord himſelf will enlighten it. The Light of whoſe Countenance never ſhines but in the diſmal Darkneſs of worldly Affliction. There He appears to comfort the Diſconſolate, and chear, with the Brightneſs of his Preſence, the deſolate and deſponding Soul. Thus it is ſaid, *Pſal.* xcvii. 11. *There is ſprung*

up

up a Light for the Righteous, and joyful Gladneſs for ſuch as are true hearted. Pſal. cxii. 4. *Unto the Godly there ariſeth up Light in the Darkneſs; he is merciful, loving, and righteous.*

The *fifth* Conſolation is this: *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him, until he plead my Cauſe, and execute judgment for me.* Let the Afflicted think on this, and remember, that though from thoſe that afflict him he may have deſerved better uſage, yet from the Hand of God, he has deſerved a great deal worſe. For whatever befals us, is by the Permiſſion of God. Upon which account, the Evils that we ſuffer from wicked Men, are called in this Verſe, *the Indignation of the Lord.* Bleſſed is he that beareth this Affliction with Patience, and receives it no otherwiſe than as coming from God himſelf. *Pſal.* xciv. 12. *Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him in thy Law. That thou mayeſt give him Patience in Time of Adverſity, till the Pit be digged up for the Ungodly.* Lam. iii. 28, 29, 30. *It is good for a Man that he ſitteth alone and keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath born the Yoak upon him. He putteth his Mouth in the Duſt, if ſo be there may be hope. He giveth his Cheek to him that ſmiteth him, he is filled full with Reproach.* This was truly the Caſe of *David*, (2 *Sam.* xv. 25. xvi. 10.) who might properly ſay, *I will bear the Anger of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.* For thus he ſpeaks, when he commanded *Zadok* to carry back the Ark of God. *If I ſhall find favour in the Eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both it and his Habitation. But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him.* And when *Shimei* curſed him, he humbly acknowledgeth the Appointment and Permiſſion of God, *ver.* 11. ſaying:

God puniſhes us by the Hands of the Wicked.

ing: *Let him alone, let him Curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.* Pſal. xxxvi. 1, 7. *Fret not* (therefore) *thy ſelf becauſe of the Ungodly. Put thy truſt in God.*

Truth and a good Cauſe ſhall triumph at laſt.

§. 11. The *ſixth* Conſolation is, *He will bring me forth to the Light, and I ſhall behold his Righteouſneſs.* This is a Form of Speech taken from the Condition of a Man that has long lain in Darkneſs, and been as a dead Man out of Mind; or of one taken out of a dark and deep Priſon, into the Light, and open Air. For as theſe having been long confined to Darkneſs and Miſery, are exceedingly refreſhed with the cheerful Light of the Sun, and ſplendour of the Heavens: So after the patient bearing of the Croſs, the Light of God's Countenance breaks forth, and the Beams of Divine Conſolation ſtrike powerfully upon the Soul, filling it with Glory and Joy unſpeakable. Did not *Joſeph* thus break through the Shades of Darkneſs and Miſery, like the bright Sun out of a Cloud? *Gen.* xli. 38. And did not God bring Holy *David* out of the Region of Miſery, and the Shadow of Death, into a State of Joy and Happineſs? So alſo at the Reſurrection of the Dead, ſhall our Bodies be brought out of their dark Priſons, into a State of everlaſting Light and Glory.

The Mockers ſhall be confounded.

§. 12. The *ſeventh* Conſolation is: *Then ſhe that is mine Enemy ſhall ſee it: and Shame ſhall cover her.* This is the proper Puniſhment of wicked Men, that rejoice at the Affliction of others, that *they ſhall be covered with Confuſion.* The Time will certainly come, when the Mockers ſhall be ſtruck with unavoidable Confuſion, and ſhall be convinced, by their own Conſciences, of the Wrong they have done to others: This was *Shimei*'s Caſe, who could not chooſe but bluſh and be confounded at the Re-

Remembrance of *David* and *Solomon*, 2 Sam. xix. 19. 1 *Kings* ii. 44. *Laugh no Man to ſcorn in the Bitterneſs of his Soul, for there is one that humbleth and exalteth*, Ecclus. vii. 11. and Chap. 27. 29. *They that rejoice at the Fall of the Righteous, ſhall be taken in the Snare, and anguiſh ſhall conſume them before they die.* Was not this manifeſtly verified in the Caſe of *Samſon*, whom whilſt the Philiſtines were mocking, they were cruſhed to death by the Fall of the Houſe, *Judg.* xvi. 23, 24, 30. So ſays the Wiſdom of *Solomon*, Chap. v. 1. *Then ſhall the righteous Man ſtand in great boldneſs before the Face of ſuch as have afflicted him.* 2 Theſſ. i. 6. *It is a righteous thing with God, to recompence Tribulation to them that trouble you: And to you who are troubled, reſt.* Job xxxi. 29. *I rejoiced not at the Deſtruction of him that hated me, or lift up my ſelf when evil found him. Neither have I ſuffered my Mouth to ſin, by wiſhing a Curſe to his Soul.* Matt. v. 44. *Love your Enemies, do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you: That ye may be the Children of your Father that is in Heaven: for he maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil, and on the Good; and ſendeth Rain upon the Juſt and the Unjuſt.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XLII.

How and why HOPE maketh not aſhamed. How it is tried by bodily and ſpiritual Croſſes.

Iſai. xlix. 23.

Thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord: For they ſhall not be aſhamed that wait for me.

§. 1. AS *Faith* is nothing elſe but a fixed ſteddy Aſſurance, by which the devout Chriſtian depends perfectly and entirely on the Favour and Mercy of God promiſed in *Chriſt Jeſus*, (Heb. xi. 1.) So *Hope* is a conſtant and patient Waiting for the Accompliſhment of that Promiſe; and is nothing elſe but a *patient, conſtant*, and *perſevering Faith.*

Hope, what it is.

§. 2. And this is that Hope which St. *Paul* ſays, *Rom.* v. 5. *maketh not aſhamed.* That being, as well as Faith, founded upon a firm, immoveable, and eternal Baſis. And this is no other than God himſelf, who never faileth thoſe that wait for him; and for the ſame Reaſon, his Peace, his Joy, his Reſt, his Glory, and his Confidence, are eternal: On this Foundation he ſtands fixt and ſecure, amidſt all the Croſſes and Calamities of Life; and though the Rains deſcend, the Flouds come, and the boiſterous Winds blow upon him, he is fearleſs and unmoved, knowing that his *Houſe is built upon a Rock.* Matt. vii. 25.

Why Hope maketh not aſhamed.

§. 3. And as *Hope* is built upon an immoveable Foundation, and the Things of this World are fleeting and uncertain; therefore its reſt, its joy, its entire dependence is on God alone, deſpiſing the Riches, Pleaſures, Honours, and Glories of the World. *Pſal.* CXXV. 1, 2. *They that*

The Property of Hope.

that trust in the Lord, shall be even as the Mount Sion: that shall not be removed, but standeth fast for ever. As the Hills stand about Jerusalem: even so standeth the Lord round about his People. On the other hand, they whose hopes are founded on the transitory Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this World, are perpetually exposed to all the Fears, Cares, and Calamities of Life, lie at the Mercy of every blast of unconstant Fortune, by which they are tossed too and fro, and depend upon the Opinion of the World for every quiet Moment they enjoy. *False Hope.*

§. 4. This can never be learnt, but under the Discipline of the Cross. For such is the Nature of Affliction, that it searches and discovers the inmost Recesses of the Soul; and shews us whether the Hope that is in us be true or false. By this Touchstone, we often find that our Hopes have not been so much fixt upon God, as upon the Favours and Blessings He bestows; that we have built upon the Sand, and idolized the Creature, instead of Worshipping the Creator. For so great is the Blindness of our Nature, that we often rest in the Creatures, instead of raising our Minds from them to the Creator, as He designed. For to this intent only doth God bestow on Man so many and great Blessings, that by the Gifts he may be drawn to the Giver, and learn to know, love, fear, reverence, and trust in God alone. But so great is the Corruption of our Nature! We are not for serving God for nought, and worship Him not for his own sake, but for what He bestows. *Hope exerts it self under the Cross.* *God's design in bestowing his good Things upon us.*

§. 5. Upon this Account it is very necessary for us, that God should sometimes visit us with Crosses and Afflictions, and deprive us of his good Things which we have abused, that we may learn to praise, and glorifie, and depend on Him alone. Nay, we sometimes proceed so *Why the Cross is necessary.*

far,

far, as to trust in our selves, and entirely depend on our own Power, Strength, and Abilities; then it is that God in meer Mercy interposes, and, that we may not grow too proud, breaks us in Pieces, humbles, and confounds us, and so empties us of our Selves, that we may be filled with all the Fulness of God. Which we cannot be, without being first emptied of all that Arrogance, Pride, and Self-conceit, which stand in perfect Opposition to the Grace of God. Hence it appears, that Hope is a *Militant Virtue*, fighting against all that Confidence in our selves, all that Self-exaltation upon the Score of our own Gifts, Merit, Righteousness, Prosperity, Honours, and Riches, in which the natural Man repose all his Confidence. The Business of Hope (I say) is to oppose and conquer all these Cheats and Delusions of the Devil, and to seek its Rest and Peace in the Sanctuary of God.

The Struggle of Hope.

God the Object of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

§. 6. Hence it follows, that *Hope*, as well as Faith and Charity, has only God for its Object. And whosoever aims at any other Mark, or places his Hope in any other Being, is truly destitute of the Hope of a Christian. For as all created Beings out of God are nothing, it will follow, that the Hope reposed in them is also nothing. So then, these three Virtues, *Faith*, *Hope*, *and Charity*, are in the highest Sense *Spiritual*, admitting no earthly mixtures, but fixed entirely on God, who is their Author and Finisher, their eternal and invisible Basis. To this refers that Passage of St. *Paul*, Rom. viii. 24. *Hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a Man sees, why does he yet hope for?* Whosoever therefore places his Hope upon any thing that is visible, has not the invisible God for his Foundation or Support, but rests upon a Shadow; and when the visible World, which is his Basis, shall sink in-

into nothing, by conſequence his Hope, that was built upon it, muſt ſink and periſh with it.

§. 7. Conſider this, O Man, and by carefully comparing Time with Eternity, perſuade thy ſelf into a true and ſaving Hope, and ſuffer thy ſelf to be led into a State of firm and laſting Peace. Eternity is unchangeable, ever conſtant, always the ſame; but Time is nothing but change and revolution, the brighteſt Day declines and ſets in Darkneſs, Weeks are ſwallowed up in Months, and Months in Years, and the moſt delicious Springs, the moſt Fruitful Summers, languiſh and ſink, by degrees, into deſolate and uncomfortable Winters; and not only this, but even all the Elementary Bodies are in a State of Change and Uncertainty, always ſhifting Forms, and revolving from one appearance to another; not to mention the continual, never-ceaſing Motion of the Heavens, influencing and hurrying the inferior World into all their own unquiet Agitation. So that this World cannot be the Region of Reſt. For whatſoever is ſubject to Time, is continually paſſing, wearing, and vaniſhing; in a Word, ALL IS VANITY, *Eccl.* i. and we ſhall never reſt but in Eternity. And though all Men, both good and bad, are eagerly engaged in the Purſuit of Peace and Tranquillity, yet they, and they only, ſhall find it, who have learned to loſe and reſign themſelves in *Chriſt*, the eternal Reſt of Souls. And this is not ſo much the Work of Labour and Study, as *of Silence and Hope*, Iſa. xxx. 15. in the quiet Sabbatiſm of the Spirit.

No Reſt in Temporal Things.

Reſt, how to be obtained.

§. 8. Moreover, the Chriſtian's Hope muſt be tried, not only by the Loſs of Temporal Things, but alſo by the with-holding the Communications of Divine Grace and Favour, (as in great Temptations commonly happen,) that

seeing our selves deprived even of those most excellent and spiritual Blessings, on which we are apt to depend, our Hope may arrive at the highest Pitch of Purity and Sincerity, and rest on God alone. And in such a Case, *We must Hope, even against Hope*, as we read *Abraham* did, *Rom.* iv. 18. here a Man must, with his blessed Redeemer, be deserted and forsaken, not only by Man, but by God himself. And this is properly *to be conformed to the Image of the Son of God*, Rom. viii. 29. This is the truest Test and Probation of the Christian's Hope.

The highest Trial of Faith.

§. 9. For, whereas in other Afflictions, our Patience, Humility, Devotion, and Charity, are principally exercised; in these spiritual Trials, our Hope is eminently proved and tried whether it be sincere or not. In which Probation, though a Man be perfectly despoiled of all his Temporal and Spiritual Enjoyments, yet shall he at last triumph *in that Hope which maketh not ashamed*. And though the Soul that is thus tried, be sometimes ready to fall into Impatience, Murmuring, Blasphemy, or the like, yet there remains as it were some gentle Breath of Hope, arising from the Ground of the Heart, by the Power of the divine Spirit, which contradicts and opposes those diabolical Suggestions. When this Combat is over, all his Transgressions are forgiven, and his Sins are covered, and he himself is *like a Brand plucked out of the Fire*, Zech. iii. 2. *or like a Piece of an Ear taken out of the Mouth of a Lion*, Amos iii. 12. Now this Impatience being involuntary, and being opposed with Sighs and Groans unutterable, ought by no means to be called Despair, considering withal, that this is the sharpest Conflict, the severest Trial of the Christian's Hope; and these are the *unutterable Groans* which St. *Paul* mentions, *Rom.* viii. 26.

The least Act of Hope preserves from Despair.

§. 10.

§. 10. They that undergo theſe Trials, are truly Chriſtian Heroes, and are nearer and dearer to God, than thoſe, who, like *Lucifer*, repoſe all their Hope and Confidence in themſelves. This Pride of theirs, in vainly arrogating any Perfections to themſelves, makes them in the higheſt Degree, Blaſphemers againſt God; whereas the Diſciples of the Croſs, are his deareſt Children, as we may ſee in the Examples of *Job* and *David*; for by being thus ſtript of themſelves, they are purified as Gold in the Refiner's Fire; and being thus cleanſed from all their Droſs of Pride and Vain-glory, they ſhine in the Glory of the Divine Image, like a beautiful Jewel ſet in the pureſt Gold.

Pride is Blaſphemy.

§. 11. By ſuch Trials as theſe, a Man is taught to put his Truſt in nothing but God alone. For when Affliction has taken every thing elſe from us, God alone cannot be taken from us. Yea, Affliction is ſo far from ſeparating us from God, that it rather brings us to God, and Him to us. 'Tis Hope therefore that preſerves us in Calamities, that we are not conſumed, which is therefore ſaid, *not to make aſhamed*, Rom. v. 5. But as the Soul came naked out from God, ſo muſt ſhe return thither again naked, and void of all Love of the Creatures; and when a Man paſſes out of himſelf and all the Creatures, whither can he go, or where can he reſt, but in the Hands of his God, who comprehendeth and upholdeth the World, and all that is therein, *Iſa.* xl. 12. Whoſoever therefore bids farewel to the World, and is void of all Love of himſelf, and the Creatures, having his Heart fixed on no earthly thing, but is perfectly free and at liberty, reſigning himſelf and all his Concerns into the Hands of God, and being content under every Diſpenſation of Providence, he may be truly ſaid to reſt in God.

Hope only ſupports and comforts us under the Croſs.

He that forſaketh the Creatures, reſteth in God.

But for as many as are entangled in the Love of themſelves and the Creatures, being Slaves to their own Wills, and reſting in them, they are, doubtleſs, in the high road to Deſtruction, and in the End, ſhall lie down in Sorrow.

CHAP. XLIII.

Comfort for thoſe that are weak in FAITH.

Iſai. xlii. 3.

A bruiſed Reed ſhall he not break, the ſmoaking Flax ſhall he not quench.

The fine Similitudes made uſe of by the Prophet.

§. 1. IN this Verſe the holy Prophet comforts thoſe that are weak in Faith, by two beautiful Similitudes, excellently adapted to the Purpoſe. For as *a bruiſed Reed* (to which he firſt alludes) muſt be handled very gently, for fear of breaking it to pieces: And as the *ſmoaking Flax*, when once it has taken Fire, muſt be ever now and then encouraged by a ſoft breath, but not blowed upon by a boiſterous and ſtrong Wind, for fear of blowing it out: So our bleſſed Redeemer, who knows our Infirmities, treats us with great Gentleneſs, refreſhing ever now and then the Spark of Faith within us, with the ſoft and gentle Breath of his Spirit, that we may not be diſcouraged by the Load of our manifold Infirmities, but enlivened and ſtrengthened under them, *Iſa.* lvii. 15. And becauſe this weakneſs of Faith is a very grievous Temptation, to which all Chriſtians

ans are more or leſs expoſed; therefore has the Holy Spirit, in the Word of God, furniſhed us with very ſtrong Conſolations againſt it, which ought deeply to be rooted in our Mind, that we may have them in readineſs, and apply them with Succeſs in the ſad Hour of Temptation.

§. 2. *Firſt*, We muſt carefully remember, that Faith is not of our Selves, but the Gift and Work of God; *Joh.* vi. 29, 44. *This is the Work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath ſent. No Man can come unto me, unleſs the Father who ſent me, draw him.* Eph. i. 19. *Who believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power.* Eph. ii. 8. *By Grace ye are ſaved thro' Faith; and that not of your Selves, it is the Gift of God: Not of Works, leſt any Man ſhould boaſt.* Heb. xii. 1, 2. *Let us run with Patience the Race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith.* Rom. v. 5. *The Love of God is ſhed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, which is given unto us.* Rom. viii. 23, 26. *We have the firſt Fruits of the Spirit, which helpeth our Infirmities.* Now ſeeing Faith is the Work of God, and not our own, it follows, that it is not in our Power to have it in ſuch Meaſures and Proportions as we pleaſe. And whereas He has alſo promiſed to ſave us by *Faith*, it follows, that He knows how ſtrong our Faith ought to be, for the obtaining that great End, and will ſtrengthen it accordingly. This was the Anſwer of God to St. *Paul: My Grace is ſufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *For no Man can receive any thing except it be given him from above*, Joh. iii. 27.

Faith is the Gift of God.

The Strength of our Faith depends on God.

§. 3. (2.) Whilſt we are in this Life, we muſt not expect to arrive at the higheſt Pitch of Perfection. This God permits, with a Deſign to cure that natural Pride and Vanity of

Spirit to which the beſt of us are ſubject, by the daily Senſe of our great and manifold Infirmities. To this we may refer that place of St. *Paul* to the *Philippians*, Chap. iii. 12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.* As if he had ſaid, Though I am not yet ſo ſtrong in Faith, as to be able to apprehend Him as I ought, yet I am apprehended in Him; *i. e.* am in *Chriſt Jeſus* by Faith. Let us, conſidering theſe things, bear patiently the Infirmities of our Nature, till we can attain to higher degrees of Perfection.

Chriſt's perfect Love, oppoſed to our imperfect Faith.

God doth not reject the weak in Faith.

§. 4. (3.) God doth not deſpiſe or reject our weak Faith, but cheriſhes, ſtrengthens, and improves it, and at laſt crowns it with a bleſſed Concluſion. In this Senſe we are to underſtand and apply thoſe golden Paſſages that follow: *Iſa.* xlii. 3. *The bruiſed Reed ſhall he not break, the ſmoaking Flax ſhall he not quench.* Iſa. xxv. 4. *Thou haſt been a Strength to the Poor, a Strength to the Needy in his Diſtreſs, a Refuge from the Storm, a Shadow from the Heat.* Iſa. xxxv. 3, 4. *Strengthen ye the weak Hands, and confirm the feeble Knees. Say to them that are of a fearful Heart: Be ſtrong, fear not: behold your God will come and ſave you.* Iſa. xl. 29, 31. *He giveth Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might, he encreaſeth Strength.* Iſa. l. 4. *The Lord God hath given me the Tongue of the Learned, that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a Word in Seaſon to him that is weary.* Iſa. lvii. 15, 16. *I revive the Spirit of the Humble, and the Heart of the Contrite ones.* Iſa. lxi. 1. *The Lord hath ſent me to preach good Tidings to the Meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort all that mourn.* In this Senſe we may underſtand that paſſage of *Exod.* xxxiv. 26. *Thou ſhalt not ſeeth a Kid in his Mother's*

Mother's Milk; that is, Thou ſhalt not grieve the tender, weak Faith of a young Chriſtian.

§. 5. A ſtrong and vigorous Faith can bear any thing, can paſs through the Flames of Fire, and the Flouds of Water; but a young, tender Faith, muſt be ſoftly and gently handled, like a bruiſed Reed, which is in continual Danger of being broken to pieces. *Jer.* xxxi. 25. *I have ſatiated the weary Soul, I have repleniſhed the ſorrowful Soul.* They that labour under the Weakneſs of Faith, they are the poor in Spirit, to whom the Bleſſing is promiſed, *Matt.* v. 3. *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit.* They that confeſs the Weakneſs of their Faith, are ſick in Spirit: and to them muſt be applied for their Conſolation, that place of St. *Matthew*, Chap. ix. 12. *They that are whole have no need of a Phyſician, but they that are ſick.* Rom. xiv. 1. *Him that is weak in the Faith receive, but not to doubtful Diſputations.* 1 Cor. ix. 22. *To the Weak, I became weak, that I might gain the Weak.* Ezek. xxxiv. 16. *I will bind up that which was broken, and I will ſtrengthen that which was ſick.* Joh. vi. 37. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* On theſe Promiſes, full of divine Conſolation, let all that are weak in Faith entirely depend, and ſatisfie themſelves, that God is faithful and true, (*Pſal.* xxxiii. 4.) and will not fail his Promiſes. To this Head alſo we refer the Inſtances of thoſe that have been weak in Faith. Such was the Father, *Mark* ix. 23, 24. to whom, when our Lord ſaid, *If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible to him that believeth*; he anſwered, *Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief!* The Nobleman, *Joh.* iv. 47. The Diſciples in the Ship, *Matt.* viii. 24. St. *Peter* ſinking in the Sea, when our Lord ſtretched out his Hand and ſupported him, *Matt.* xiv. 31. Therefore ſays St. *Paul*,

1 Theſſ. v. 14. *Comfort the feeble minded, ſupport the Weak, be patient towards all Men.*

God's greateſt Care, is for the Weak in Faith.

§. 6. (4.) It is plain, that God has the greateſt Concern for thoſe that are weak in Faith. Our Lord himſelf tells us, *Matt.* ix. 12. *They that are* (Strong and) *Whole, have no need of a Phyſician, but they that are Sick* (and Weak.) The Shepherd leaves his 99 Sheep in the Wilderneſs, and goes ſeeking that which was loſt, until he find it, *Luk.* xv. 4. and as tender Mothers ſhew the greateſt Indulgence to their weak and ſickly Children; ſo does our Heavenly Father to thoſe that are weak in Faith.

Faith is a Deſire to believe.

§. 7. (5.) But if thou ſhalt ſay in thy Heart, *that thou perceiveſt no grain of Faith in thy ſelf*: Then I would ask, Doſt thou carefully and diligently ask it? If thou doſt, all is well, fear not. For ſince it is God that worketh in us *to will*, it follows, that whoſoever finds in himſelf that good Will and Deſire, finds in himſelf the Work of God. Hence let him be encouraged and aſſured, *That he who has given us the Will, will alſo give us the Power to do*, Phil. i. 6. ii. 13.

God doth not diſappoint the Hopes of his Servants.

§. 8. (6.) God is ſo compaſſionate to the Prayers and Deſires of his faithful Servants, that He never diſappoints the Hopes and Expectations of thoſe that truſt in Him. *Lord, thou haſt heard the Deſire of the Poor, thou prepareſt their Heart, and thine Ear hearkeneth thereto*, Pſal. x. 17. Whence it follows, that thy Faith is as great as thy deſire of obtaining it. *For God knoweth the Heart and Reins*, Pſal. vii. 10. Pſal. xci. 14. *Becauſe he hath hoped in me, therefore will I deliver him.*

We ought rather to glory in our Infirmities, than in our Strength.

§. 9. (7.) We ought rather to glory in the Weakneſs, than in the Strength of our Faith. For ſo is the Will of God concerning us, that we fall not into ſpiritual Pride, 2 *Cor.* xii. 9.

My

My Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I glory in mine Infirmities, that the Power of Chriſt may reſt upon me. Let this be thy Comfort when thou laboureſt under weakneſs of Faith.

§. 10. (8.) Faith, though it be never ſo weak, is ſtill Faith. For our Salvation and Bleſſedneſs depend not upon the Power or Strength of our Faith, but upon *Jeſus Chriſt*, on whom it lays hold. As therefore a precious Jewel may be held by the Hands of a little Infant, as well as of a ſtrong Man: So a weak Faith may as well lay hold on the Merits of *Chriſt Jeſus*, (the true Chriſtian's only Hope and Treaſure) as that which is much ſtronger, and by conſequence, both be capable of the ſame Degrees of Righteouſneſs, as well as Bleſſedneſs. And as the Apple of the Eye, ſmall and ſlender as it is, can perceive not only the Light and Splendor of the Meridian Sun, but even the Sun it ſelf, though ſo many times bigger than the Earth; ſo does the Eye of Faith, though weak and infirm, perceive and feel the Sun of Righteouſneſs, the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, with all the bright Rays of his ſpiritual Gifts and Graces.

A weak Faith may lay hold on Chriſt, as well as a ſtrong one.

§. 11. (9.) Such is the Nature of Faith, that it is ſometimes ſtronger, and ſometimes weaker; and ſometimes the Light thereof ſeems to be Darkneſs. This has been atteſted by the Examples of almoſt all the Saints, particularly *David*, and *Abraham* who is called *the Father of the Faithful*, and yet, *Gen.* xii. 11. he was afraid the *Egyptians* would put him to death for *Sarah* his Wife, and this too after he had received the Promiſe. *Moſes* alſo, at the Waters of Strife, diſcovered his want of Faith, *Numb.* xx. 10, 11. *David*'s Faith was ſometimes ſo ſtrong, as to raiſe him up to Heaven; and then again

The Weakneſs of Faith is ſometimes perceived by the moſt holy Men.

again ſo weak, as to let him ſink into the Belly of Hell, and make him complain to God, that *he was caſt out of the Sight of his Eyes*, Pſal. xxxi. 23. Whence it follows, that we muſt not conclude, becauſe a Man's Faith is weak, that therefore he has none at all; or that they who are contending againſt the Weakneſs of Faith, are therefore forſaken by God. We know that Fire is often hid under Aſhes, though it gives neither Light nor Heat; we know that the Trees are alive, though in Winter they are ſtript of their Leaves: So we may in like manner conclude, that thoſe People may have Faith towards God, in whom we diſcern very ſlender Signs or Tokens of it. For the Spirit of the Lord is like the Wind, that bloweth when and where it pleaſes, *Joh.* iii. 8.

Complaints of the Weakneſs of Faith, is a Sign of Faith.

§. 12. (10.) He that complains of the Weakneſs of his Faith, ſhews plainly, that Faith is ſtriving and ſtruggling within him, and a *ſtriving Faith* is a true Faith; for there is a continual Struggle in every Man between Faith and Infidelity. He is perpetually aſſaulted by Temptations to Unbelief, ſo that his Life is one continued Combat; and he is obliged to be as watchful, as though he were in the midſt of drawn Swords, and expected every Moment to be cut in Pieces. Here is the Trial of the Chriſtian's Faith, here is the Exerciſe of his Patience, to unite his earthly Heart with the Spirit of *Chriſt*; to make the barren Soil of his Soul, fit to receive the Heavenly Seed; to make the Darkneſs of corrupt Nature capable of the Divine Light. The Fleſh is continually enclining to the broad Way of the World, and endeavouring to tyrannize over the Spirit; the Darkneſs is no ſooner ſcattered, than it endeavours to recover its ground, and ſpread it ſelf again over the Face of the Soul. This is what all the Saints have

have confeſſed and lamented, and it is a moſt certain Token of true Faith. On the other hand, where there is no Faith at all, there is no Room for ſtriving. Here let the languiſhing Soul call to mind that comfortable Aſſurance given us, 1 *Cor.* x. 13. that *God will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will with the Temptation alſo make a Way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.* God *giveth Power to the Weak, and to them that have no Might, he encreaſeth Strength,* Iſa. xl. 29.

§. 13. (11.) Let us be aſſured, that whenſoever, in our greateſt Infirmities, we can but think upon *Jeſus Chriſt*, He will be with us, and dwell in us by Faith: Thus it is ſaid, *Exod.* xx. 24. *In all Places where I record my Name,* (or as it may be better read, *where there is a Remembrance of my Name,*) *I will come unto thee, and I will bleſs thee.* For we cannot ſo much as think upon God, without his ſpecial Preſence and Aſſiſtance. Moreover, being engrafted into *Chriſt*, as Branches into the living Vine, we truly live in Him, and draw Life and Nouriſhment from Him. *Joh.* xv. 1. *Our Life,* and the Strength of our Faith, *is hid with Chriſt in God.* Col. iii. 3. and *the Holy Spirit witneſſeth the ſame in our Hearts,* by the Joy, Peace, and Comfort, which he produceth there. *Rom.* viii. 16. As therefore in the Old Teſtament, there was no Prophet but heard God ſpeaking in him; ſo under the Goſpel, there is no Chriſtian but hears *Chriſt* ſpeaking in him, and ever now and then taſts the Unction of the Holy Spirit. And ſo ſtrong is this union of our Faith with *Chriſt*, that all the Power of Death and Hell cannot diſſolve it; becauſe *Chriſt*, who is the Life and Root of our Faith, is immortal. And though thou haſt not always ſo livley a Perception of this in thy Heart, *Yet greater is he that is in thee, than he that is in the World,* 1 Joh. iv. 4. §. 14.

Chriſt is preſent with us, whenever we think upon him.

Chriſt lends his Hand to the Weak in Faith, as he did to St. Peter ſinking in the Sea.

§. 14. (12.) When we are weak in Faith, let us look up unto *Chriſt Jeſus* our Redeemer, and merciful High Prieſt, who offered up himſelf for us on the Croſs, and is ſtill praying that our Faith may be ſtrengthened; as He did for St. *Peter*, *I have prayed for thee that thy Strength fail not*, Luk. xxii. 32. to whom alſo He ſtretched out his Almighty Hand, when he thought himſelf ſinking into the Sea, *Matt.* xiv. 31. And *Joh.* xvii. 11, 20. He ſaith, *Sanctifie them in thy Truth*: *Neither pray I for them alone*, (viz. the Apoſtles,) *but for thoſe who ſhall believe on my Name through their Word.* So alſo, *Heb.* ii. 17. iv. 15. we are told, *We have not an High Prieſt that cannot be touched with a Feeling of our Infirmities; but that was in all Points tempted like as we are, but without Sin. Who is at the right Hand of God, who alſo maketh Interceſſion for us.* This Interceſſion ought to be our Comfort when our Faith is weak and languiſhing, from whence we ſhould, by a lively and ſtedfaſt Faith, expect a Bleſſing.

Chriſt prays for all the Faithful.

A weak Faith hangs upon the Divine Mercy, as an Infant upon the Mother's Breaſt.

§. 15. (13.) Our next Support is, *the Divine Mercy*, which is inexpreſſibly great, as infinite as God himſelf. Of this let no Man deſpair. *This Mercy of his prevents us, waits for us, ſupports us, and endureth for ever.* And this He never denies to any one. Come then, ye dejected Penitents, that complain of the Weakneſs of your Faith, caſt your Selves into the everlaſting Arms of divine Love, which will never leave you nor forſake you.

The Weak in Faith ſhould comfort themſelves with this Conſideration, that God is the Author and Finiſher of their Faith.

§. 16. (14.) God, who has wrought the Beginnings of Faith in us, has graciouſly promiſed, *that he will perfect it to the Day of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. i. 6. He will *ſtrengthen, ſtabliſh, ſettle us*, 1 Pet. v. 10. *That we ſhall be kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation, receiving the End of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls*, 1 Pet.

1 Pet. i. 5, 9. Which is *the End* that God propoſed to our Faith, when He firſt gave us the Beginning. Faith being therefore the Operation and Work of God, muſt be perfected by the Author of it. For this Cauſe the Author to the *Hebrews*, Chap. xii. 2. calls the bleſſed *Jeſus*, not only *the Author*, but alſo, *the Finiſher of our Faith.* And Chriſt himſelf, *Joh.* x. 28. tells us: *My Sheep ſhall no Man pluck out of my Hand.*

§. 17. (15.) To this end He has given us the various Means of Grace; the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer, for the Nouriſhment and Strengthening of our Faith. *Lord, encreaſe our Faith*, ſaid the Diſciples, *Luk.* xvii. 5. *Lord, help my Unbelief*, ſaid the Man in the Goſpel, *Mark* ix. 24. Moreover, God *has promiſed his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luk. xi. 13. Rom. v. 5. viii. 26. *The Spirit alſo helpeth our Infirmities.* In a Word, this is the End and Deſign of Chriſtianity, that we may grow, and be perfected in Faith.

§. 18. (16.) *Laſtly*, It is certain, that our Faith is founded on God's eternal Love unto us, *Rom.* viii. 30. *Whom he hath predeſtinated, them he alſo glorified.* But we are juſtified by Faith alone in *Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. iii. 28. *God hath choſen us to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. Come then, O devout Soul! comfort thy ſelf with theſe Promiſes, do not ſink under the Weakneſs of thy Faith. When thy Faith ſeems to be at the loweſt Ebb, then is thy Saviour nearer to thee than thou thinkeſt. This was the Caſe with the Diſciples; when they looked upon themſelves as loſt in the Tempeſt, then was *Chriſt* at hand to ſave them, *Matt.* viii. 25. Let us alſo be perſuaded, that our Re-

God is nigh at hand to the Weak.

Redeemer and Saviour is never ſo near at hand, as when we think our ſelves in moſt Danger.

CHAP. XLIV.

Comfortable Inſtructions for thoſe that are labouring under great Temptations in Spirit.

Iſa. xlviii. 10.

I have choſen thee in the Furnace of Affliction.

1. *The* Original *of theſe Temptations.*

§. 1. IT is a certain and undoubted Truth, that *all ſpiritual Afflictions do proceed from God*; according to 1 *Sam.* ii. 6, 7. *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up.* By *the Grave* in this Place, is meant nothing elſe but ſuch a State of ſpiritual Afflictions, which, like the Grave, is void of all Light and Comfort. The Soul that is thruſt down into this Priſon, looks upon it ſelf as dying and pining away, as hated, deſpiſed, and perſecuted by every Creature of God. Under this diſconſolate State, the poor Man cries out with holy *David*, (Pſal. lxxvii. 3.) *My Soul refuſeth Comfort.* And well it may, when the only ground of Comfort, *viz.* the Preſence of God's Spirit, and the Light of his Countenance, are with-holden from him. This is that *Grave*, into which God brings many a faithful Servant. Here the devout Soul finds no Comfort but in Silence and Reſignation, in thoſe unutterable Sighs and Groans

What that Grave *is into which God brings his Servants.*

Groans which proceed from the Ground of the Heart; for ſo great is its Affliction and Diſtreſs, that it cannot ſo much as think upon God, or the Promiſes contained in his holy Word; its Faith grows weak, its Hope languiſhes, and the whole Man is feeble, withered like Graſs, (*Pſal.* xxxviii. 8, 9. cii. 3.) and juſt ready to periſh, were it not inwardly ſupported by the ſecret Word and Power of God.

The ſpiritual Grave or State of Dereliction exemplified.

§. 2. Into this Grave or Shadow of Death, did God bring his only Son, our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, when *his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful even unto Death; and in his Agony ſweat great Drops of Blood*, Matt. xxvi. 38. Luk. xxii. 44. In this State a Man undergoes greater Afflictions, than in Death it ſelf. Yea, here a Man wiſhes for Death, and longs to find a Grave, where he may reſt from his unſpeakable Labours and Sufferings. Thus we find holy *Job* wiſhing for Death. And our bleſſed Lord himſelf, under this State of Dereliction, ſweat Drops of Blood, which He did not, even upon his Croſs, under the Agonies of Death. It was this which made him cry out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me*! He complains that He was forſaken of God, though He was continually preſent with Him, and preſerved him under all his Trouble. But now, what can be more wonderful, than that *Chriſt* himſelf ſhould complain for want of Comfort, conſidering his intimate Union with God? For He was both God and Man. Yet had God ſo withdrawn his Conſolations from Him, that his Humane Nature was left perfectly deſolate and comfortleſs. Now if the bleſſed *Jeſus*, who was united to the Eternal Godhead, and anointed with the Heavenly Oil of Gladneſs, was forced to undergo ſo bitter a Conflict; ſurely ſinful Man has no reaſon to wonder, when he is brought under the

God ſecretly aſſiſts and preſerves us in this heavy Warfare.

the ſame fiery Trial, as if ſome ſtrange thing had happened unto him; ſince we ſuffer nothing but what our bleſſed Maſter ſuffered before us: And certainly nothing is more reaſonable, than that the Members ſhould ſuffer with the Head.

This the Teſt of all the Saints.

§. 3. This therefore is a kind of Teſt or Trial, whether thou beeſt truly a Member of *Chriſt*, and a Partaker of his Sufferings, *Rev.* i. 9. This ſeems to have been *Hezekiah*'s Caſe, when he complained, *Iſa.* xxxviii. 14. *Like a Crane or a Swallow, ſo did I chatter: I did mourn as a Dove.* And *Job*'s, Chap. vii. 3. xxx. 20. *I cry unto thee, and thou doſt not hear me. I ſtand up, and thou regardeſt me not.* And ſo again, Chap. ix. 16. *If I had called, and he had anſwered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my Voice.* Such were the Complaints of holy *David*, Pſal. vi. xiii. xxxviii. lxxxviii. Where we may ſee, as in a Glaſs, how wonderfully all the Saints and Servants of God have been cleanſed and purified in this Furnace of Affliction. This was the Ground of thoſe many bitter Expoſtulations we meet with in the Writings of *Job* and the holy Pſalmiſt. Sometimes they were ſo much out of Hopes, that they could not think it poſſible that God ſhould ever ſhow Mercy to them: at other times, they are full of Hope and Confidence, and believe *that their Redeemer liveth*, as *Job* expreſſes it, Chap. xix. 25. Yet all this while the carnal Man has no Notion of theſe kind of Sufferings, or the Complaints ariſing from them. This we find by the Example of *Job*'s Friends, who not underſtanding what was the true State of his diſtreſſed and afflicted Soul, reproved him, as one that had loſt Patience, and charged God fooliſhly.

§. 4.

§. 4. For a Man, when he is come into this State, falls into ſuch a degree of Incredulity, that there is ſcarce the leaſt Tract or Token of Faith remaining in his Soul. For all the Powers of Faith being as it were recollected in the Ground and Centre of the Soul, ſeem to the Man to be but loſt, whilſt yet they operate in Secret, and breath out themſelves in Sighs and Groans unutterable. And this abſence, this want of Faith, is a kind of helliſh Torture to the Soul. Therefore he cannot believe that God will be merciful to him, but cries out, *O how willingly would I believe, if it would but pleaſe God to give me the Power*! And in the heighth of this Conflict, the very Scriptures themſelves afford him neither Light nor Comfort. This is that Criſis of the Soul, when God, by humbling it, ſhews it how unworthy and vile ſhe is in her ſelf, yea, that of her ſelf ſhe is *nothing*, but all her ſufficiency is of God, that thence ſhe may learn not to truſt in her ſelf. Nevertheleſs, the poor Soul ever now and then perceives ſome diſtant Gleams of Light breaking through the thick Darkneſs, which adminiſter Comfort and Support, and keep it from the Depths of Deſperation.

In theſe great Temptations, the Powers of Faith are hidden in the Ground of the Soul, and exert themſelves only in Sighs and Groans.

This inſtructs the Soul in her own Vileneſs.

§. 5. Now though perhaps it may happen, that a Man, in the bitterneſs of his Soul, may grow impatient and peeviſh, and be tempted to fret againſt God, yet let him know, that God is merciful, and will by no means impute it to him as ſin. He knows whereof we are made, He ſees the Struggle of our Souls under that fiery Trial, when He ſets his Hand to purge away our Droſs, and cleanſe us from our Impurities. In a Word, the moſt holy and beſt beloved Children of God, are they that have paſſed through this Furnace of Affliction; as we may ſee by the Exam-

The Soul's ſtruggle under ſuch Temptations.

We never learn Faith but under the Croſs.

ples of *Job*, Chap. xlii. of *David*, and *Jeremiah*, Chron. xx. 12. For theſe have learned Faith in the School, and under the Diſcipline of the Croſs; whilſt the tender and delicate Chriſtian, who flees from the Croſs, and expects to learn it amidſt the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of the World, will find himſelf miſerably deceived in the End. But further.

The Soul's Aſſurance under Deſolations.

§. 6. (2.) Let us call to mind that noble Saying of *Jeremiah*, Lam. iii. 32. *The Lord will not caſt off for ever; but though he cauſe Grief, yet will he have Compaſſion according to the Multitude of his Mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.* Whence thou mayeſt learn, that though the Lord ſuffer thee to be afflicted for a Seaſon, yet He will not caſt thee off for ever. But perhaps thou wilt ſay: that *the Thoughts wherewith thou art troubled, are not from God, but from the Devil.* Now though it cannot be denied, that they are ſuggeſted to us by the Devil; yet it is alſo true, that the Devil can do nothing but by God's permiſſion. In this Caſe, look unto *Jeſus*, whom our Heavenly Father ſuffered to be tempted by the ſame Adverſary. The fiery Darts which the Evil one caſt at our bleſſed Saviour, came indeed from himſelf, and not from God, but it was God that gave him permiſſion to aſſault Him as he did. And though our bleſſed Lord bore all this, yet did He ſtill continue the dearly beloved Son of God, nor could the Tempter with all his Art and Power do Him the leaſt Harm. *Matt.* iv. Hear this, O afflicted Soul, and believe that thou alſo ſhalt be ſafe and unhurt among all the fiery Darts of the wicked one. Remember the Caſe of *Job*, when, by God's permiſſion, the Devil ſo afflicted him internally and externally, that he curſed the Day of his Birth, yet was God ſtill with him, and we find him

What we muſt do when we are tempted with a Spirit of Blaſphemy.

him, Chap. x. 13. thus expreſſing himſelf to God: *Theſe things haſt thou hid in thine Heart: I know that this is with thee.* Having thus diſcovered the *Origin* of this ſpiritual Affliction; let us next enquire into the *Reaſons* why God ſends it upon us.

2. *The Cauſes of theſe great Temptations.*

§. 7. *Firſt* then, it is certain, that the true inward Taſt of the Word of God, is accompanied with Joy, Peace, and Comfort, vaſtly exceeding any Comforts or Enjoyments of this Life. This is the true Joy of our Souls, a foretaſt of eternal Life, ariſing from the true and living Knowledge of *Chriſt Jeſus*, by which we diſcover the Heart of God, flowing with the moſt tender Compaſſions, inflamed with an ardent, ſweet, and eternal Love towards loſt Mankind. Now ſo corrupt and perverſe is humane Nature, that it is too apt to be exalted above meaſure, by the abundance of theſe divine Manifeſtations, and make them occaſions of ſpiritual Pride; and the Man that is thus viſited and comforted from above, will be very apt to think highly of himſelf, to overvalue his Sanctity, and think meanly of the reſt of the World, who are ſtrangers to theſe Conſolations; and thus forſaking the Fountain of living Waters, from whom all the Streams of Bleſſing flow, and to whom, with all Humility, they ought to be aſcribed, the Man grows vain and arrogant, and ſets himſelf up in the Place and ſteed of God. This perverſeneſs of Soul, as it is directly contrary to true Penitence, and the Methods of our Salvation, ſo it is very hateful to God. This makes Him withdraw his Conſolations from us, and hide himſelf in thick Darkneſs, ſo that though we call, and cry, and ſearch never ſo diligently, we ſhall not be able to find Him. This is a deplorable State, when we are hanging, as it were, between Heaven and

Why God withdraws his Comforts from us.

Hell, oppreſſed and afflicted on every ſide, not knowing whither to fly for Relief or Comfort, having no certain evidence whether we believe or not, whether we hope or not, whether God be angry with us or not, whether we are in a State of Life or Death. This is that Darkneſs and Deſolation which we find ſo paſſionately deſcribed, *Pſal.* lxxxviii. of which the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks alſo, *Pſal.* xxxi. 23. *When I made haſt, I ſaid, I am caſt out of the ſight of thine Eyes. Nevertheleſs, thou heardeſt the Voice of my Prayer when I cried unto thee.*

The Advantage of wanting the Divine Favour.

§. 8. Now although nothing be more bitter to Nature, than to be ſo long deprived of the Comforts of the Divine Preſence; yet it is certain, that this very *deprivation* is more profitable to the Soul, than all the Enjoyments and Glories of the World. By this, as by a fiery Trial, we are taught Humility, Repentance, Contempt of the World, and the true Value of all its Favours and Enjoyments, that they are dangerous, tranſitory, and periſhing, and can give no ſolid Comfort to the diſtreſſed Soul. And though the Soul in this State be encompaſſed and ſurrounded with diſmal and helliſh Perplexities, ſo that it can hardly lift up it ſelf to God, yet is there left a kind of deep and ſecret Sorrow, venting it ſelf in holy Sighs, and devout Aſpirations towards God, and a longing for his Favour. Hence we may learn how great a GOOD there is in GOD; that no true, ſolid, or conſtant Peace can be found but in Him. And this cannot be learnt any where, but in this experimental *School of Temptation*; in which alone the trueſt Knowledge is to be learned. And whoſoever is unacquainted with this, knoweth not GOD and CHRIST, as they ought to be known.

§. 9.

§. 9. And would to God, that for his Glory, and our own unſpeakable Advantage, we would readily and cheerfully ſubmit our ſelves to this terrible Viſitation, which is deſigned for the Trial of our Faith, even as Gold in the Furnace is tried! I doubt not but we ſhould quickly reap the amazing Benefits of ſuch a Purgation. The faithful Soul that can hold out, and not faint under it, comes forth glorious, like Gold out of the Fire, cleanſed from all its Droſs; ſo that neither Fire, nor Water, nor the Croſs, nor Death, nor even Hell it ſelf, can hurt it. Such a one will learn how to behave himſelf ever afterwards with Patience and Humility, both in Proſperity and Adverſity, not to ſink under the Croſs, not to be inſolent in Proſperity, not to depend upon himſelf, or be puffed up with his own fanſied Perfections, but to look up ſtedfaſtly unto God, the everlaſting Fountain and Giver of all Goodneſs, and to embrace every Diſpenſation of Providence, (whether ſweet or bitter) as his only Happineſs, and in every State or Condition of Soul or Body to rejoice in God alone.

What were therefore to be wiſhed.

The Fruit of Temptation.

§. 10. (*2dly,*) Whenſoever it ſhall pleaſe God to caſt any of us, poor Creatures, into this trying Furnace, it will be much more convenient and profitable for us to pray for *Patience* under it, than for deliverance from it. For when once the Fire of Temptation has purged away the Droſs of our Iniquities, Pride, Luxury, Covetouſneſs, and Envy, it will afterwards be much eaſier for us to ſteer aright in every Storm that ſhall happen, by having our own Wills ſwallowed up in the Will and good Pleaſure of God. But when out of too great Indulgence to

We ſhould not pray for Deliverance from Temptations, but for Patience *under them.*

the Infirmities of our corrupt Nature, we endeavour to avoid this fiery Trial, it often happens, that before we can receive any Benefit from it, we are contriving to make our eſcape. So that if God did not often keep us under the Trial againſt our Will, we ſhould moſt certainly fly from it, without conſidering whether we were ſufficiently cleanſed and purified, according to the Will of God, and the Neceſſities of our corrupt Nature; like froward Children, that, did not their Parents or Phyſicians prevent them, would throw away that Phyſick which alone can cure their Diſorders. But God knows our Caſe, and what is proper for us, better than we our ſelves. And therefore He has appointed certain Bounds and Meaſures of Affliction, to which He confines the Soul ſo long, till He ſees it proper to releaſe her. So that we ought not ſo much to pray for Deliverance from Temptations, as for Patience under them.

The Certainty of our Deliverance.

§. 11. (3*dly*,) Our Deliverance is ſo certain, that we have not the leaſt Reaſon to doubt of it, according to that of *Jeremiah*, *Though the Lord cauſe Grief, yet will he have Compaſſion, according to the Multitude of his Mercies*, Lam. iii. 32. This is the Promiſe of God, who is Truth it ſelf, and therefore ought diligently to be weighed and conſidered by us. And it is much better to know and digeſt ſome few ſuch comfortable Paſſages of Scripture, than to burden our Memory with a great many, without a true ſpiritual Taſt and Reliſh. For when a Man has, by a lively Faith, digeſted one, he will eaſily underſtand and digeſt all the reſt; and he that can draw Nouriſhment and Food from *one* Text, will thereby learn to do the ſame by all the reſt. It will firſt of all be very uſeful, to repeat over now and then, with lively Affection, the lxxxviii Pſalm,

Pſalm, where thou wilt ſee the State of thy Soul drawn to the Life. There thou wilt find, that there have been others in the World before thee, that have been tried and afflicted as thou art, and yet have afterwards been delivered, refreſhed, and comforted of God, as you clearly find in the following Pſalm, *viz.* lxxxix. where the Prophet rejoicing in the divine Comfort, begins as in a Rapture, *My Song ſhall be always of the Loving-kindneſs of the Lord.* Be thou therefore confident, and believe that God will alſo in due Time comfort thee with the ſame Conſolation. For the Evil Spirit, that always delights to afflict righteous Souls, has, from the beginning of the World, made it his Buſineſs to gall and wound them with his fiery Darts. As in a tempeſtuous Sea, one Wave is continually rolling upon the Neck of another; ſo do the various Temptations of Satan upon the afflicted Soul, ſometimes oppreſſing it with fearful, dejected, and melancholy Thoughts; by and by, with Impatience, Unbelief, blaſphemous and wicked Thoughts. So that as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it: *One Deep calleth upon another*, Pſal. xlii. 8. The Terrors and Miſeries of ſuch a Soul, are ſometimes ſo great, that no Creature can give her Comfort; yea, thoſe very things which give joy and delight to others, are to ſuch a Man, not only joyleſs, but burdenſome. The whole World is to him but one great and bitter Croſs; yea, and God himſelf appears ſo terrible and dreadful to him, that he cannot bear the Apprehenſions of it. Thus holy *Job* bitterly complains, Chap. vii. 13, *&c.* and the Load is encreaſed by the Sting of his own Conſcience, which terrifies him with this dreadful Sentence, *There is no help for thee in thy God*, Pſal. iii. 2.

God leaves none of his Servants in Hell.

3. *The* Remedy *againſt ſuch like Temptations.*

§. 12. Againſt theſe Wiles of the Devil, there is no better Remedy, than to endeavour to ſtrengthen thy ſelf after the Examples of *Job*, *David*, and other holy Men. (1.) By bearing thy Affliction ſo long as it ſhall pleaſe God, and waiting patiently till the Clouds of Darkneſs be driven away; *Iſa.* liv. 11. *Mich.* vii. 9. *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him, till he bring me forth to the Light, and I ſhall behold his Righteouſneſs.* For where God afflicteth, it is in no Man's Power to comfort. *It is he that killeth, and maketh alive, he bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up.*

By ſtopping our Ears to the Opinion of the World.

§. 13. (2.) We muſt in this Caſe ſtop our Ears againſt the Opinions of the World, and with holy *Job*, diſregard the Accuſations of our Friends, the Terrors of the Devil, the Enemy of all Peace and Comfort, the Reflections of our own Hearts, the Stings of our own Conſciences, and all the Grudgings of Fleſh and Blood. *For though our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart*, yea, than all the World, or even the Devil himſelf, 1 *Joh.* iii. 20. And rather call to mind what God himſelf has promiſed to afflicted Souls. *Iſa.* lxvi. *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit.* And Chap. xlviii. 10. *I have choſen thee in the Furnace of Affliction.*

By reflecting on the Examples of others.

§. 14. (3.) Conſider alſo the Examples of holy Men, Did not they ſuffer as thou doſt, and were they not at laſt delivered? Does not *David* complain, *Pſal.* xiii. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever?* And did God forſake him in his Troubles? He immediately adds, *I will truſt in thy Mercy, and be joyful in thy Salvation*, Pſal. lxxvii. 8, 11. He complains: *Has God forgotten to be gracious?* And did God leave him in this extremity? No certainly,

tainly, for upon his deliverance he adds, *I will remember the Years of the right Hand of the moſt Higheſt.* Thus when God diſcovered himſelf in Terrors to *Jeremiah*, he prays, Chap. xvii. 17. *Be not a Terror to me!* but immediately adds: *Thou art my Hope in the Day of Evil.* Did not *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf cry out, *Pſal.* xxii. 2. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* But was He all this while forſaken of God? No ſurely; for he adds, *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren*, Pſal. xxii. 23. and *Pſal.* cxviii. 17. *I ſhall not die, but live: and declare the Works of the Lord.*

§. 15. Thou alſo, after this Example of thy Saviour, muſt be content to drink the Wine mingled with Gall and Myrrhe, that thou mayeſt hereafter ſit down with him at his Royal Supper in the Kingdom of Heaven. *Iſa.* lxv. 13. Learn therefore to bear *his Shame*, Heb. xiii. and thou ſhalt be a Partaker of his Glory. Learn to be conformed to *Chriſt crucified*, that thou mayeſt be conformed to *Chriſt glorified*, Rom. viii. 29. Phil. iii. 21. *But eſpecially on the Example of Chriſt.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XLV.

Comforts for thoſe that labour under great Temptations.

Iſa. xli. 17.

When the Poor and Needy ſeek Water, and there is none, and their Tongue faileth for Thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them.

Comfort for the broken in Heart.

§. 1. IN theſe Words, the Holy Spirit comforts all thoſe that are broken in Heart, miſerable, afflicted, tormented, hungring and thirſting after God, by whom they look upon themſelves as forſaken, condemn'd, and reprobate, ſo that with holy *David* they cry out, *Pſal.* lxxxviii. 3. *My Soul is full of Trouble, and my Life draweth nigh unto Hell.* For ſuch as theſe, I ſhall touch upon ſome few Heads, by way of Comfort and Advice under theſe ſpiritual Temptations.

All Temptations come by God's permiſſion.

§. 2. (1.) We muſt remember, that all Kinds of ſpiritual Temptations, ſad and melancholy Thoughts, terrors of Soul, and ſtings of Conſcience, cannot happen to us *without the particular Permiſſion and Appointment of God our Heavenly Father*, notwithſtanding all the Malice and Fury of the Evil Spirit. For God has expreſly told us in his Word, that the Devil has not the leaſt Power over any Creature; nor can hurt even a Hair of our Heads, *Matt.* x. 30. For all Creatures are in the Hand of God, and not in the Power of the Devil. Much leſs has he any Power over Man, unleſs by the Per-

The Devil has no Power over the ſubordinate Creatures.

Permiſſion of God, for a certain Seaſon, as in the Caſe of the *Gergeſenes*, Matt. viii. 32. and of *Job*, Chap. i. 12.

§. 3. And if he has no Power of himſelf over a Hair of our Heads, or the leaſt Part of our Bodies; much leſs can he of himſelf afflict, diſquiet or torment our Souls. Hence ſays *David*, Pſal. xxxiv. 7. *The Angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* And *Zech.* ii. 5. *I the Lord will be unto her a Wall of Fire round about.* So *David* prays, *Pſal.* xvii. 8. *Keep me as the Apple of thine Eye.* And *Pſal.* lxxxviii. 7, 8. he plainly acknowledges God to be the Author of all thoſe heavy Trials and Oppreſſions of his Spirit. *They have laid me in the loweſt Pit, in a Place of Darkneſs, in the Deep. Thine Indignation lyeth hard upon me, and thou haſt vexed me with all thy Storms. Thy wrathful Diſpleaſure goeth over me, and the Fear of thee hath undone me.* So likewiſe *Pſal.* lxxi. 20. *What great Troubles and Adverſities haſt thou ſhewed me: yet diſt thou turn again and refreſh me, yea, and broughteſt me from the Deep of the Earth again.* Agreeable to which, is the Song of *Hannah*, 1 Sam. ii. 6. *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up.*

And much leſs over the Soul of Man.

§. 4. For as the Son of God himſelf deſcended firſt into Hell, before He aſcended up into Heaven: So likewiſe muſt the true Members of his ſpiritual Body. When a Man's Conſcience is ſo awakened and enlightened, as to feel and experience in himſelf the Strength and Power of Sin, the Sting of Death, the Curſe of the Law, and the fiery Darts of the Devil; then is his wretched Soul ſo oppreſſed with Grief and Horror, that with *David*, Pſal. lxxvii. 3. it refuſes to be comforted, and looks upon

The Soul's deſcent into Hell ſpiritually in Conformity to the Head.

on it ſelf as rejected and perſecuted by every Creature of God. The Man, I ſay, that is in this State, does not enjoy the leaſt Glimpſe of Comfort, believing that he deſerves it not: He ſtruggles with Deſpair, he contends with Hell, and has already a Taſt of its Puniſhments. This is *the Sting of Hell*, yea, Hell it ſelf, full of Affliction, Terror, and Amazement, full of Darkneſs and Deſpair. He that ſuffers this, is not indeed corporeally, but ſpiritually, and in his Soul, brought down into the Belly of Hell; ſo that with his bleſſed Saviour on the Mount of *Olivet*, *he is in an Agony, is very Heavy, and ſorrowful, even unto Death.*

An Objection Anſwered.

§. 5. But you will ſay, Is it not ſtrange, that God ſhould ſuffer his faithful Children, who have been Baptized into *Chriſt*, thro' Him obtained Remiſſion of their Sins, been juſtified through Faith, and redeemed to Eternal Life, to be thus miſerably tempted and afflicted by the Devil, oppreſſed with helliſh and dreadful Thoughts, and to undergo this ſpiritual Martyrdom? In anſwer to this, we muſt conſider, that it is not our Buſineſs to enquire into the ſecret Reaſons of God's Diſpenſations, but to reſt ſatisfied with what He has told us, that all theſe Kinds of Affliction come from Him. Now we may reſt aſſured, that whatſoever comes from Him, is neceſſary for our ſpiritual Welfare, according to what we are told, *Rom.* viii. 28. *That all things work together for Good, to them that love God.* Though perhaps there are ſubſtantial Reaſons, why God ſuffers his beloved Children to fall into ſuch bitter Temptations.

Spiritual Temptations, whence they proceed.

They are profitable for Salvation.

The Cauſes of Temptation.

§. 6. The *Firſt* may be, to bring us to a true Senſe of the Strength of Sin, which is the Sting of Death, 1 *Cor.* xv. 56. The Curſe of

of the Law, the Wrath and Juſtice of God, and the Cruel Tyranny of *Satan*, which are the Wages of Iniquity. Theſe hang together as it were in a Chain, as *Hezekiah* complains of them, *Iſa.* xxxviii. 14. when he chattered as a Crane or a Swallow, and mourned as a Dove. *The First.*

§. 7. (2*dly*,) That we may have worthy Apprehenſions of *the Value and Greatneſs of our bleſſed Saviour's Paſſion*, and all the Merits of our Redemption, and learn from hence, that by the heavy Sufferings of his own Soul, He has delivered us from the Pain and Puniſhments of Hell, *Pſal.* xxii. 2. *The Second.*

(3*dly*,) That we may be conformed to the Image of *Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 29. *The Third.*

(4*thly*,) That we may learn to Taſt *the Efficacy of God's holy Word*, and the hidden Comforts that flow from it. Thus we are told, *Iſa.* xxviii. 19. *by vexation only we ſhall underſtand the Report.* *The Fourth.*

(5*thly*,) That we may hence learn to exerciſe Faith, Hope, Charity, Humility, Patience, and Prayer; that ſo *the Trial of our Faith may be found much more precious than Gold that periſheth, though it be tried in the Fire*, 1 Pet. i. 7. *The Fifth.*

§. 8. (6*thly*,) That we may afterwards have a more lively Perception of the Divine Comforts. Whence St. *Paul* ſays, 2 *Cor.* i. 5. *As the Sufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our Conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt.* *The Sixth.*

(7*thly*,) That we may obtain greater Degrees of Glory in the Life to come, according to that of *Rom.* viii. 17. *If we ſuffer with him, that we may be alſo glorified together.* *The Laſt.*

§. 9.

The one great Consideration which ought herein to satisfie us.

§. 9. Now though we know not that God intended these particular Advantages by our Sufferings; yet ought we to be satisfied with this one Consideration, that our Sufferings are agreeable to the Will of God. *For if the Hairs of our Head are all numbred,* (Matt. x. 30.) how much more Care, may we suppose, will God take of our Souls, that the Devil may not drive us headlong into Despair? Hence also we may further learn, not to expect Deliverance from any other than God himself, through our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who *hath overcome the World and the Devil*, Joh. xii. 31. xvi. 11. He therefore that labours under Temptation, must fly unto *Jesus Christ*, from Him alone he must expect Help, Comfort, and Peace, which nothing in this World can give him.

Christ our help and comfort in Temptation.

These Temptations Tokens not of Wrath, but of Mercy.

§. 10. (2.) These Trials are not to be looked upon as Tokens of God's Anger, but of his infinite Mercy, that He is hereby fitting us to be partakers with them who have through many Temptations entered into his Glory. Such was *David*, who complains, *Psal.* xviii. 4. *The Pains of Hell came about me, the Snares of Death overtook me.* And the whole lxxxviii*th* Psalm is full of Lamentations and Complaints of the Hellish Pains and Sufferings he underwent in his Soul. This too was the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s Case, when he wishes, Chap. xx. 17. *That his Mother's Womb had been his Grave*; that he had never seen the Light, that so he might have avoided his many bitter Sufferings. Thus it was with holy *Job*, when, Chap. vi. 2. he cries out: *O that my Grief were throughly weighed, and my Calamity laid in the Ballances together. For now it would be heavier than the Sand of the Sea.* And Chap. vii. 15. *My Soul chooseth Strangling and Death, rather than Life.* Thus St. *Paul* was buffeted by *the Messenger of Satan*, 2 Cor. xii.

7.

7. Nor, *laſtly*, did the Son of God himſelf, eſcape the ſame Trials, when his holy Body trembled, and his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful, when He cried out, *Matt.* xxvii. 46. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

§. 11. From theſe Examples we may learn, that we are not the only Perſons whom God has thus afflicted, but that other Saints and Servants of God have been viſited in this manner as well as we. And as God forſook not them in their extream Miſery, ſo we may aſſure our ſelves, that He will in his own due Time deliver us, as well as them. Which is an Argument full of Conſolation. Now as Bodily Diſeaſes and Perſecutions are Marks and Tokens of the Divine Favour, ſeeing by them God endeavours to make us conformable to his Son; (which, on that account, we ought to bear with Patience,) ſo it is a much greater Token of the Divine Favour, and the Glory that ſhall follow it, when He ſends Affliction on our Souls, as well as on our Bodies, and by variety of Croſſes brings us to an entire Conformity, both in Body and Soul, to *Chriſt* our Head. For as the Body of the bleſſed *Jeſus*, at the Time of his Paſſion, was perfectly overwhelmed with all Kinds of Pains, Torments, and Sufferings, and his Soul full of Anguiſh, Diſtreſs, and Sorrow: So muſt his *ſpiritual* Body in all its true and living Members, be made partaker of the ſame Sufferings, whether internal or external, ſo that the whole myſtical Body, as well as the Head, may contribute each in their Proportion, to fill up the Meaſure of Sufferings.

The Caſe of all the Saints our Encouragement.

If bodily *Croſſes are Tokens of God's Favour, much more are* Spiritual.

The myſtical Body *of Chriſt muſt ſuffer as well as the Head.*

§. 12. This is what St. *Paul* means, *Col.* i. 14. *I fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Chriſt in my Fleſh.* So that every living Member of *Chriſt* muſt expect to bear their ſhare of his Croſs, in order to perfect that which is yet lack-

The ſolid Comfort of our Conformity with the Sufferings of Chriſt.

lacking in the Suffering of *Jesus Christ*. This ought to make us rejoice in Affliction, when we consider, that *the Sufferings of this present Time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us*, Rom. viii. 18. We should, when these spiritual Storms blow hard upon us, *bear with Patience the Paternal Chastisement of God*, Mich. vii. 9. expect his Help, not faint in Prayer, but think thus with our Selves: This indeed seems to be a Season of Sufferings; but when the Storm is blown over, it will end in Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, *Isa.* liv. 7.

The Victory of Christ belongs to us.

§. 13. (3.) We must support our selves under this internal Conflict, with the comfortable Promises of *Jesus Christ*, that in due time we shall conquer if we hold out, and faint not. Thus He tells us, *Joh.* xiv. 30. *The Prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in me.* And Chap. xvi. 33. *Be of good Chear, I have overcome the World.* For as all the Host of *Israel* triumphed in the Person of *David*, when he slew *Goliah*, and routed the *Philistines*, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 51. So the Victory of our Lord, is the Victory of all true Believers. Hence we are told, *Rev.* xii. 10. *Now is come Salvation, and Strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the Power of his Christ: for the Accuser of the Brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God Day and Night. And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their Testimony.* Whensoever therefore thou findest thy self assaulted by the fiery Darts of the Evil One, and thy Soul afflicted with such Suggestions as these: *Thou art Damned, Thou art undone, God hath forsaken thee, Thou art mine; 'Tis in vain for thee to Hope, Believe, or pray any longer.* When thou findest thy self assaulted with these Kind of

Thoughts,

Thoughts, take Courage, and anſwer him boldly: *O thou Enemy of Mankind, what haſt thou to do to condemn me? God hath not appointed thee to be my Judge; but the Faithful ſhall judge the World, and thee, and all thy wretched Accomplices, at the laſt great Day,* 1 Cor. vi. 3. *yea, thou* Prince of this World art judged already, *Joh.* xvi. 11.

Support and Comfort againſt the fiery Darts of the Devil.

§. 14. (4.) Becauſe ſuch is the Nature of this Spirit of Blaſphemy, that a Chriſtian is forced to *undergo* it ſore againſt his Will; and does all that in him lies to reſiſt and oppoſe it; hence let him comfort himſelf when he is tempted, that God *will never lay it to his Charge*, ſince it is not he that acts, but the Devil, and the Soul is paſſive, and may therefore be aſſured that ſuch Thoughts ſhall never be imputed to him for ſin. For as People in a beſieged Town, cannot hinder the Enemy from throwing Fire into the Town, though they may do what they can to quench it, and hinder its ſpreading. Or as *Hezekiah*, *Iſa.* xxxvi. 12. could not hinder the Blaſphemy of *Rabſhakeh*: So we cannot hinder the Devil from ſhooting his envenom'd Arrows at us. All that we have to do is, to bear it with Grief, penitential Sorrow, and to take all the Care we can, not to ſuffer our Thoughts to vent themſelves in blaſphemous Words; but, on the other hand, having ſet a Guard upon our Tongues, we ſhould endeavour all we can ſo to ſtifle theſe helliſh Sparks, that they break not out into a Flame, as we read of *Jeremiah*, Lam. iii. 28. Moreover, foraſmuch as thou art aſſaulted againſt thy Will, it is plain, that thou haſt yet *a living and ſtruggling Faith.*

Tokens of a vital Faith under the utmoſt Oppreſſions of Temptation.

§. 15. (5.) We ought to be comforted, if we find but *one ſingle Aſpiration of our Hearts towards God*, or any devout Affection ſpringing in our Souls by the reading of any Text of holy Scripture.

pture. For this is that ſpark of *Faith* and divine *Grace*, which, like the ſmoaking Flax, God will not quench, but preſerve it in its weakeſt State, when it ſeems to be almoſt dead, *Iſa.* xlii. 3. One ſuch devout Aſpiration as this, is a certain Sign that the holy Spirit is ſtill preſent with us, tho' in a manner ſecret and almoſt indiſcernible in the deepeſt ground and centre of the Soul. For as the Body is not looked upon as dead, whilſt there is the leaſt Breath or Pulſe remaining; ſo we muſt believe that the Life of Grace is not quite extinct in us, whilſt but a ſingle Sigh can force its way through the thick Miſts of Temptation, towards Heaven; or the leaſt Spark of divine Light ſhines through the Darkneſs of our Souls. For this Life of the Soul is purely internal and ſpiritual, and the Soul ought to be content with the leaſt ſpark of this inward Light and Life, till the Spirit of Joy and Liberty return to him, and comfort him with all the Conſolations of God. Now let us ſuppoſe a Man in ſuch a Caſe, that he can neither pray, nor ſo much as think a good Thought; and that this inability of his is matter of the greateſt Grief and Affliction to him, the Anguiſh of ſuch a Soul, becauſe it cannot pray, is in it ſelf a true and effectual Prayer. Theſe are the *unutterable Sighs and Groans* which St. *Paul* mentions, *Rom.* viii. 26. and to this belongs what the Prophet ſays, *Iſa.* xli. 17. *When the Poor and Needy ſeek Water, and find none; and their Tongue faileth for Thirſt: I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them.*

The faithful Soul the Habitation of God under all Temptations.

§. 16. (6.) Be the Temptations and Afflictions of a faithful Soul never ſo great, yet the Scripture aſſures us, that *it is the Habitation of God*, and not of the Devil. Yea, that he has no Poſſeſſion of it, appears from the furious Aſ-

ſaults

ſaults he makes upon the Afflicted Soul, by which he endeavours to conquer and ſubdue it; *but greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World*, 1 Joh. iv. 4. and *Iſa.* xli. 10. *Fear not, for I am with thee.* Therefore tho' this trial of the Soul, be the greateſt Affliction that can poſſibly befal it in this Life; yet foraſmuch as we are aſſured, *That God will look unto thoſe that are of contrite Hearts, and will dwell with them*, (Iſa. lvii. 15.) that He ſent the bleſſed *Jeſus* from Heaven to comfort the Afflicted, and to preach glad Tidings to the diſtreſſed; (*Iſa.* lxi. 2.) that He himſelf invites weary Souls to come unto Him, *Matt.* xi. 28. Therefore let no Man Deſpair, when he finds himſelf plunged into this Furnace of Affliction. For theſe are they whom God has commanded his Prophet to comfort, *Iſa.* xxxv. 3, 4. *Strengthen ye the weak Hands, and confirm the feeble Knees. Say to them that are of a fearful Heart, Be ſtrong, fear not.* And God himſelf tells us: *that his Strength is perfected in our Weakneſs*; which made St. *Paul* ſay of himſelf, 2 Cor. xii. 10. *When I am Weak, then am I Strong.* Yea, the Grace of God is ſo far from forſaking a Man, when he is buffeted by *Satan*, 2 Cor. xii. 7. that it was at that Time particularly, that God told him, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee.*

§. 17. (7.) There is not ſo much as one Inſtance to be produced, of any Man that was forſaken of God under this ſpiritual Conflict. But on the other hand, it is certain, that He has always reſtored his Servants, *whom He has thus choſen in the Furnace of Affliction*, to the ſame and higher Degrees of Grace, than thoſe from whence they thought they had fallen. This ought to be great Matter of Comfort to us, and perſuade us, that when the Hour of Temptation is ended, *Comfort certainly follows Temptation.*

the Season of Joy and Redemption will quickly follow. So that *Job* says truly, Chap. v. 17. *Happy is the Man whom God correcteth: Therefore despise not thou the Chastening of the Almighty. For He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and his Hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six Troubles, yea, in seven there shall no Evil touch thee.* Let no Man therefore faint under Tribulation, but bear the Indignation of the Lord for a little while, *Micah.* vii. 9. till the Sun of Righteousness arise upon him again with Healing and Consolation on his Wings, for *there springeth up a Light for the Righteous, and joyful Gladness for such as are true-hearted,* Psal. cxii. 4. xcvii. 11.

Of Spiritual Martyrdom.

§. 18. (8.) *Thauler* reckons these spiritual Afflictions and Trials among the singular Gifts and Favours of God, speaking thus of them. *Upon the first Approach of these Temptations, God deprives a Man of all that He has given him, forcing him to descend into himself, and see his own Poverty and Weakness, and also trying him how he will behave himself in this naked and desolate State. And this is done, when a Man is perfectly forsaken; so that he knows nothing of God, his Grace, his Comforts, or the Gifts which He once bestowed upon him; but has now taken away, and hid them from his Eyes, so that he knows not whither to fly, or which way to turn himself. When a Man is once brought into this state of* Dereliction, *there is nothing better for him, than cheerfully and willingly to submit himself to the Order and Decree of God. It was indeed a great Thing in the holy Martyrs of Old, to lay down their Lives for God; but then they were so abundantly strengthened by the Comforts of his Holy Spirit, that the most exquisite Torments were to them but trifling and contemptible, and Death it self had lost its Terrors. But to have God hide his Face, and deprive us of his Grace and Com-*

Comfort, is a Martyrdom much greater than theirs. And this is when all the Sins, all the Infirmities and Temptations, which a Man has long ago conquered, assault him afresh, with greater Rage and Violence than when he was the Servant of Sin. In this Case, the best Way is, to suffer with Patience, and resign one's self entirely to the All-wise Providence of God.

§. 19. Such Sufferers as these, *Thauler* calls *spiritual Martyrs*, from the bitter spiritual Trials and Sufferings they undergo whilst they are deprived of the Light of God's Countenance, and the comfortable Influences of his Spirit, insomuch, that they know not which way to turn themselves for Relief; and when they see and consider the Gifts and Graces bestowed upon others, they fall into bitter dejection of Spirit, reckoning that it is their own Faults that they are thus barren, and destitute of spiritual Joy and Comfort. And though they take never so much Pains, they still seem to labour in vain; for they find their dryness and hardness of Heart still growing and encreasing upon them; so that at last, being quite void of Comfort, and having lost all Patience, they fall into a secret Distrust of God's Mercy, and believe that He is offended with every thing they do. And this gives them the most exquisite Torment, that after all their various Conflicts, and endeavours to regain their lost Patience, and support themselves with hopes of better Times, yet they see with all their Labour and Trouble, they are not one jot the better. But this is that which brings them to a Conformity, not only with the Saints, but with *Christ* their Head, whose whole Life was nothing but Affliction. And these *spiritual Martyrs*, though in the Sight of the World, they are of all Men most miserable, and seem to be *forsaken and cast off by God*; yet are they in Truth, *the richest towards God, his dearest, and best beloved*

The admirable divine Conduct of these Spiritual Martyrs.

How they are God's dearest Friends.

Friends. At the same Time they are also in their own Opinion the *most Unfaithful* to him, though in reality they have the firmest Faith, and most ardent Zeal for his Honour and Service, and upon that Account undergo those heavy Sufferings. From this Faith and Love towards God (of which they themselves are ignorant) it comes, that they are tormented with divers Temptations, to which they will not consent, so that even Death it self would not be so bitter to them, as the Anguish they feel upon that account. They labour with their utmost Strength to amend their Lives, and improve in Piety; and when they find their labour to be in vain, they relapse into the old Sense of their Infirmities, attended with the most exquisite Torments of Mind. All this, I say, they suffer from a Principle of Love towards God; esteeming themselves the worst of all Men, though they are most precious in the Sight of God.

The Result of the Whole.

§. 20. No wiser Counsel, no better Advice can be given to these, that with humble Patience and Resignation they bear those Troubles which they cannot help, and which are but aggravated by Impatience. For after this dark Night of unspeakable Affliction, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, refreshing and filling their Hearts with inexpressible Light and Glory.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVI.

Comforts under the ſecret and ſpiritual Temptations of the Devil; aſſaulting the Soul with blaſphemous and wicked Thoughts.

LUK. xxii. 31, 32.

Behold, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as Wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not; and when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren.

§. 1. HOW great and how implacable the Enmity of the Devil is againſt all Mankind, we are abundantly informed, not only by Scripture, (as 1 *Pet.* v. 8. *Be ſober, be vigilant, for your Adverſary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour,* Eph. vi. 12. and Rev. xii. 12. *Wo to the Earth, and to the Sea, for the Devil is come down among you, having great Wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort Time*; and from the Hiſtory of *Job*;) but alſo more particularly from the daily Experience of many tragical Examples, and the many grievous and dangerous Temptations wherewith he aſſaults the Souls of good Men in their ſpiritual Warfare. Sometimes he aſſaults *our Faith*, at another time *our Chriſtian Calling*, and interrupts and diſturbs us in *the Exerciſe of our Devotions*. All which are clearly expreſſed in the Story of our Lord's Temptation, *Matt.* iv. 3. Whence we may learn, that no Man is ſafe from his Temptations. For if he ſpared not *Chriſt* our Head; how can ſinful Men expect to eſcape him? For which Reaſon, our Lord himſelf

All Men are expoſed to the Temptations of the Devil.

adviſes us, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation*, Matt. xxvi. 41.

What his Darts are, and how to be Repelled.

§. 2. Now among the various Temptations with which the Devil afflicts pious Souls, this is one, *viz.* The diſturbing and tormenting a Man *with blaſphemous, prophane, impure, and troubleſome Thoughts*, ſo as to ſink him deep into Melancholy and Deſpair. And theſe abominable Suggeſtions are ſo crafty, ſudden, and violent, that they will not give a Man a moments Reſt. Upon this Account St. *Paul*, Eph. vi. 16. calls them, *the fiery Darts of the wicked one.* i. e. As an Enemy is perpetually caſting Fire into a Beſieged Town; ſo the Devil is continually vexing and tormenting thoſe poor Souls with his helliſh Suggeſtions. And as the Wounds of an envenom'd Arrow are moſt exquiſitely painful; ſo are the Wounds cauſed by the fiery Darts of *Satan*, incredibly more ſharp and intolerable than the ſevereſt bodily Pains and Sufferings. Wherefore I ſhall here preſent you with ſome ſelect Heads of Comfort againſt theſe ſecret and internal Temptations, all drawn from the Word of God.

The Grounds of Comfort under theſe Aſſaults.

1. *They are for Correction & Purification.*

§. 3. *Firſt*, As to the Words prefixt to this Chapter, it is plain that they were uttered by our bleſſed Saviour, with the utmoſt Tenderneſs, and moſt ardent Compaſſion. Whence we may gather, that the being afflicted with theſe kinds of Temptation, is no Mark or Token of God's Diſpleaſure, much leſs that He ſhould deſign to deſtroy us thereby, and deliver us up into the Hands of the Enemy. On the other hand, ſuch a Temptation is nothing elſe but a divine Rod of Correction, whereby God intends to humble a Man, and draw him to himſelf. This appears from the Example of St. *Peter*, whoſe arrogant Confidence, and Self-conceit, opened a Door to the moſt grievous Temptation, and the

Sin

Sin which followed. And St. *Paul* tells us of himſelf, 2 *Cor.* xii. 7, 8. *Leſt I ſhould be exalted* (ſaith he) *above meaſure, through the abundance of Revelations, there was given unto me a Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And he ſaid unto me, My Grace is ſufficient for thee.* From which Words, we may learn Three Things, (1.) That St. *Paul*, and all others that are exerciſed with theſe kind of Trials, are humbled thereby. (2.) That all thoſe Sufferings come upon us by the particular Order and Appointment of God. (3.) That the utmoſt Rage and Fury of the Devil againſt a Man, cannot put him out of God's Favour, which is expreſſed in theſe Words, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee.*

§. 4. The *ſecond* Ground of Comfort is contained in theſe Words: *Satan hath deſired you.* From which Words we may learn, that tho' the Devil is always deſirous and ready to caſt his fiery Darts at us, yet that he has no Power without the particular leave and permiſſion of God; who never gives him any other than a limited Commiſſion, beyond which, like a Dog in a Chain, he cannot go. To this belongs that Place of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. x. 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.* To which we may add, the Example of holy *Job*, againſt whom the Devil dared not to attempt any thing, till he had firſt obtained leave of God, and that too clogged with a Limitation. See Chap. i. 12. 2. *The Weakneſs of the Devil.*

§. 5. The *third* Conſolation, ariſes from theſe Words of our Lord: *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.* In what Manner, and with what Affection the bleſſed *Jeſus* recommended us to the Protection of his Heavenly Father, we are told, *Joh.* xvii. namely, that 3. *The Prayer of Chriſt.*

He

He *would be pleaſed to keep his faithful Servants from the Evil of the World; that He would dwell in them, and they in Him; and that of thoſe whom He had received of his Father, he might loſe none.* Which Prayer, were it but heartily applied to the diſtreſſed Soul, would ſupport it with a Divine Courage ſo as to abide in *Chriſt* by Faith, not doubting but that *Chriſt* in her, by the ſame Faith, would conquer and triumph over all her Enemies.

4. *The Preſence of Chriſt and his Spirit in us.*

§. 6. The *fourth* Comfort may be drawn from *Joh.* xvii. 21. Where our bleſſed Lord prays for us, and begs of his Heavenly Father, *that we may abide in Chriſt, and Chriſt in us.* And St. *John* tells us, 1 Epiſt. iv. 4. That *greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World.* Becauſe *Chriſt* dwells in every believing Soul by Faith; and all the Aſſaults of the Devil cannot diſpoſſeſs this illuſtrious Gueſt. And as *Chriſt* himſelf, in whom God himſelf, yea, all *the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt bodily*, and perſonally, *Col.* ii. 9. was tempted by *Satan*, thou muſt not therefore think that *Chriſt* is not in thee, becauſe thou thy ſelf art likewiſe tempted. And if *Chriſt* be in thee of a Truth, thou needeſt not be afraid what the Devil can do unto thee. For *Chriſt* will certainly defend the Place of his own Reſidence, againſt all Oppoſers. Moreover, thou haſt within thee the Holy Spirit, who *helpeth thine Infirmities, and maketh interceſſion for thee with Groans and Sighs unutterable*, Rom. viii. 26. And whenſoever thou findeſt theſe within thee, thou mayeſt aſſure thy ſelf, that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in thee, and he will not forſake thee, as our bleſſed Lord aſſures us, *Joh.* xiv. 16. *The Father ſhall give you a Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* Laſtly, God has promiſed, that He will dwell in the humble and contrite Hearts,

Iſa.

Isa. lvii. 15. *I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble Spirit.* And such undoubtedly are all those who are tormented with these hellish Temptations.

§. 7. The *fifth* Ground of Comfort, is contained in our Saviour's Promise. *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.* O Divine Comfort! As if our Lord had said: *Your Infirmities shall never be so great, but that there shall be some Sparks of Faith left. Yea, though you feel in your selves no Comfort, and on that account, are apt to think your Faith quite extinct, yet will I never suffer your smoaking Flax to be entirely quenched,* Isa. xlii. 3. But if you ask, how shall I know this? I answer, (1.) *By the earnest Longing of your Soul after Faith.* For to desire and pray for Faith above all other Things, arises from a living Spark of remaining Faith. (2.) *By your Resistance of Temptation,* which is a certain Token of a living Faith; and this Resistance and Opposition appears plainly in this, that all these wicked and blasphemous Thoughts arise in your Soul sore against your Will, and that you bear them with more Pain, than you would any external Violence offered to your Body. Now whatsoever of this Kind a Man suffers against his Will, is opposed and resisted by Faith, and shall never be imputed to him for Sin; for nothing but a voluntary Violation of the divine Law, makes a Man sinful in the Sight of God.

5. The Promise of Christ and his Mediation for us.

Signs to judge of a living Faith.

§. 8. If *Adam* had not yielded and consented to the Suggestions of *Satan*, he had not had sin; but so soon as ever he submitted his Will to that of the Tempter, he fell into the Transgression. Whence it follows, that it cannot be sin, which is not attended with the Consent of the Will. A Besieged City cannot hinder the Enemy from throwing Fire into it; but they may possibly

No Sin without the Will consent to the Temptation.

poſſibly prevent its ſpreading, and burning the Town to Aſhes. So we cannot avoid the fiery Darts of the Devil, with which he delights to gall and afflict the Souls of good Men, though perhaps by Care and Diligence we may ſo ſuddenly quench them, as to ſuffer them to do no miſchief. By ſuch Tokens as theſe we may diſcover, that our Faith, however weak in our Opinion, is not dead in the Sight of God.

6. Chriſt's Victory ours.

§. 9. Being once aſſured of this, we may likewiſe certainly depend upon Victory; which opens to us a *ſixth* Fountain of Comfort. To this therefore refers that comfortable Saying of our Saviour: *Joh.* xiv. 30. *The Prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in me.* Joh. xvi. 33. *Be of good Chear, I have overcome the World.* For whatſoever *Chriſt* did, He did it for our ſakes; that ſo He himſelf, with all his Benefits and Merits, might be entirely ours. Seeing therefore He hath conquered *Satan*, it follows, that He hath conquered him not only for himſelf, but for us alſo: Which is beautifully repreſented in *David*'s Conqueſt of *Goliah*. For as all the People of *Iſrael* conquered in *David*, (for ſuch was the Agreement betwixt them, that the two Armies ſhould follow the Fate of their reſpective Champions,) ſo do all faithful Chriſtians triumph over *Satan*, in and through the Victory of CHRIST their Head; and his Conqueſt is ours. According to that of St. *Paul*, Eph. vi. 10. *Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.* And 1 *Cor.* xv. 57. *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

7. All the Saints have been tempted in like manner.

§. 10. *Seventhly*, We ought to be comforted by *the Examples of the Saints*, who have been as cruelly tempted as our Selves. Of theſe our bleſſed Saviour ſpeaks, ſaying, *when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren.* By which Words, our

our Saviour plainly ſends us to be inſtructed by the Examples of our Brethren, that have been tempted and perſecuted by the Devil in like manner with us. Hence St. *Peter*, 1 Epiſt. v. 9. ſays: *Knowing that the ſame Afflictions are accompliſhed in your Brethren that are in the World.*

§. 11. *Laſtly*, We ought to be comforted by *the Example of* JESUS CHRIST himſelf. Over Him, though He were the beloved Son of God, the Devil had ſo much Power, as to hurry Him from Place to Place, and uſe Him with ſo much Inſolence, that it is wonderful the Son of God ſhould ſuffer it from that Rebellious, Apoſtate Spirit. But this was the Condition of the Humble *Jeſus*, who emptied himſelf of all his Glory and Majeſty, that He might be tempted as Man, and made like unto his Brethren.

8. *And above all, the King of Saints himſelf.*

A PRAYER.

SPREAD out thy Wings over me, O Lord, that I may flee under them, from the Face of the Enemy that purſueth me: And break thou the Heads of the great Dragon, whoſe continual endeavour, and only deſire is, to deceive and devour the Souls which thou haſt created. And therefore we cry unto Thee, our God, deliver us from our daily Adverſary, who, whether we Sleep or Wake, Eat or Drink, or whatſoever elſe we be doing, preſſeth in ſtill upon us by all kind of Means, aſſaulting us Day and Night with Trains and Policies, and ſhooting his venomous Arrows at thy Servants, ſometimes openly, and ſometimes privily, to ſlay our Souls. Help me now, O Lord, the leaſt and unworthieſt of all thy Servants: Yea, make haſt, O my God, to deliver me. For behold how he watcheth continually againſt me, and never ſleepeth, that he may pluck

me from thy Hands: O behold what infinite Snares he hath pitched before my Feet, and how he hath filled all my Ways with ſundry Traps, to catch my Soul. But thou art the God in whom I have truſted, my Rock, and my Strength: and under the Shadow of thy Wings I ſhall be ſafe, though even Thouſands ſhould fall on one Hand or the other of me. Unto thee my Soul therefore fleeth, that I may be preſerved in this evil Day: O that thy Grace and Mercy may always prevent me, delivering me from the evil One, and all his Temptations, ſaving me from what is paſt, lifting me up from that is preſent, and guarding me from that which is to come; and unravelling all his Snares before me, as I may laugh at his Devices, and being eſcaped, may give Glory to Thee for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XLVII.

Why God ſometimes delays his Comfort and Aſſiſtance.

HAB. ii. 3, 4.

For as yet the Viſion is for an appointed Time, but at the End it ſhall ſpeak, and ſhall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry. Behold his Soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him: but the Juſt ſhall live by his Faith.

How we are to interpret God's delaying to help us.

§. 1. IN theſe Words the Holy Spirit comforts us, under *the Delays of Divine Aſſiſtance*: For ſo we are apt to call thoſe very Methods by which God makes haſt to help and ſave us. For He has, in his unſearchable Wiſdom,

dom, appointed every Man his Cross in Weight and Measure; so He delivers it out to them in meet Proportions, sending one Cross after another, till the Measure of their Sufferings be accomplished, that so, by a gradual Conquest, they may at last obtain a compleat Victory. This dealing of God with us, we are apt to call his delaying to help us; not considering, that this is the quickest Method of Accomplishing the Measure of our Sufferings, and compleating our Victory. So that, that which to us seems to be delay, is in the sight of God, making hast to help us.

Impatience under the Cross most hurtful.

§. 2. But he that is refractory, and impatient under the Cross, has no Peace in his Soul. For as Patience renders the Soul easie and quiet; so Impatience makes it restless and uneasie. Thus our Lord tells us, *Matt.* xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart, and ye shall find rest to your Souls.* And whereas the Prophet adds, that *the Just shall live by Faith*; that relates to the Promises of divine Grace and Assistance, which we lay hold on by Faith. And from this Consolation, the Soul derives Life and Joy; as *Hezekiah* says: *Isa.* xxxviii. 16. *Lord, by these things Men live, and in all these Things is the Life of my Spirit.* On the other hand, Unbelief produces Impatience; Impatience, Disquiet; Disquiet, Despair; and Despair, everlasting Death. So that we may most truly say, that *the Just lives by Faith*; i. e. by the Grace of God, which he patiently expects and waits for.

God foreknows our Seasons of Affliction.

§. 3. (2.) *Solomon* tells us, *Eccles.* iii. 1. *For every thing there is a Season, and a Time for every purpose under Heaven.* From whence we may learn, that Crosses and Afflictions come not to us by Chance; but that every Season and Time of Affliction is appointed to us by God. Wherefore in our Troubles, let us lift up our Eyes unto

unto Him, in whoſe Hand are our Happineſs and Miſery, our Riches and Poverty, our Life and Death, (*which all come from God*, as the Son of *Sirach* tells us, *Ecclus.* xi. 14.) yea, and every Point and Moment of our Afflictions. This is beautifully expreſſed in the Story of *Joſeph*, whom, for thirteen Years together, God viſited with remarkable Afflictions, *Gen.* xxxvii. 36. xli. 1. *Till the Time came that his Cauſe was known, the Word of the Lord tried him*, as the Pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.* cv. 19. And by his Example we may learn, how uſeful and neceſſary it is for us, that God ſhould ſometimes delay his help. For when he was ſold, he was Seventeen Years old; and when, by the Hand of God, he was brought out of Priſon, he was juſt Thirty; and the bearing his Croſs all that Seaſon, was that very thing that qualified him for the glorious Advancement that followed. In that honourable Poſt he continued Eighty Years; whence we may obſerve, that his thirteen Years of Suffering, were recompenced with ſeventimes Thirteen Years of Glory and Honour; for he lived an Hundred and Twenty Years.

It is good for us that God ſhould delay to help us.

§. 4. Let the devout Chriſtian, that ſuffers Impriſonment, or any kind of Perſecution for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, call to mind the wonderful Providence of God to *Joſeph*, and ſatisfie himſelf, that the All-wiſe God, who has appointed his Seaſon of Affliction, has likewiſe determined the certain Time of his Deliverance. For as a skilful Builder, or Maſter of a Family, knows very well by what time his Labourers will have finiſhed their Task; ſo hath Almighty God meaſured out the Weight and Duration of every Man's Croſs, and appointed the Seaſon of his Deliverance. And as ſoon as that comes, the Light of Divine Grace will immediately

The Providence of God herein moſt wonderful.

mediately break forth, and comfort the afflicted Soul.

§. 5. (3*dly*,) As God alone has determined the Number of our Crosses; so He has been pleased to conceal from us the Time of our Deliverance, satisfying us with that declaration of our blessed Lord, *Act.* i. 7. *It is not for you to know the Times and the Seasons which the Father hath put in his own Power.* Agreeable to which are the Words of God, who when He had threatened the Children of *Israel* with the *Babylonish* Captivity, He adds, *Is not this laid up in Store with me, and sealed up among my Treasures?* Deut. xxxii. 34. from whence we may learn, with how great and how unsearchable Wisdom God governs, punishes, and corrects the Children of Men. To this also may be referred that Saying of St. *Paul*, Act. xvii. 26. *And has made of one Blood, all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the Face of the Earth, and hath determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation.* In which divine Words we are instructed, that not only the Period of every Man's Life, but even the Place and Manner of it, are appointed by God. And this general determination of Time and Place, includes in it the Crosses and Afflictions appointed to particular Persons.

The Hour of Deliverance is in the Hand of God.

God foreknows the Place where we shall suffer.

§. 6. (4*thly*,) And as God hath appointed the Period, Time, and Place, of the Sufferings of his Servants; so has He also of the Persecutions and Oppressions of the Wicked. These, when they have for a Season been breathing out Oppressions and Slaughters, then that God to whom Vengeance belongeth, awaketh, and riseth to Judgment; according to that of *Deut.* xxxii. 35. *To me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence, their Foot shall slide in due Time: For the Day of their Calamity is at hand, and the Things*

The Tyranny of wicked Men limited to a certain Time.

that ſhall come upon them, make haſt. This is abundantly confirmed by the Examples of Hereticks and Tyrants that have moſt grievouſly perſecuted the Church of God; and when the Devil has raged long enough, and his Commiſſion is expired, then has the Divine Vengeance ſo confounded him and all his Accomplices, that the whole World has been amazed and aſtoniſhed at the righteous Judgments of God. *Be patient therefore, Brethren, ſtabliſh your Hearts; for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one againſt another, Brethren, leſt ye be condemned: Behold the Judge ſtandeth before the Door.*

CHAP. XLVIII.

That in the Time of Trouble, we muſt look unto the Example of the Patient JESUS, and to the Glory of the promiſed *Reward*: And how theſe Two Conſiderations are ſufficient to comfort us under the greateſt Calamities.

LUK. xxiv. 26.

Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his Glory?

Chriſt at his Incarnation *took upon him the Miſeries of all Mankind.*

§. 1. THE Eternal Son of God, by his moſt holy Incarnation, took upon Him all the Miſeries and Calamities of Mankind: And that not out of Compulſion and Neceſſity, but out of *pure Love*, that by his Example He might teach us Patience, and enable us to bear the Croſs, and overcome the Calamities of

of this mortal Life. And as He was to become Man, ſo He willingly ſubjected himſelf to all the Miſeries to which Man is expoſed. And as He came down from Heaven for the ſake of all, ſo He took upon Him the Infirmities of all. So that from the Moment of his Birth, to the Hour of his Death, He was (as the Prophet truly expreſſes it,) *Deſpiſed and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief.* There was not one Calamity incident to Humane Nature, but what He ſuffered, and particularly, *extream Poverty.* As He ſays of himſelf, *Matt.* viii. 20. *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Neſts; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.* In the Diſcharge of his Office, He underwent the moſt bitter *Perſecutions*, being expoſed to the Hatred, Calumnies, Slanders, and Reproaches of a wicked and perverſe Generation. In his Paſſion He ſubmitted to the moſt ignominious Sufferings, ſo that as the Prophet expreſſes it, *Iſai.* liii. 4. *We did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted.* His tranſcendent Love met with the higheſt Ingratitude, his illuſtrious Miracles were rewarded with Revilings, and his Heavenly Doctrines with Calumnies and Lies. And ſince our bleſſed Lord ſuffered all this, why ſhall we expect to be exempted from Sufferings and Injuries?

The Life of Chriſt was one continued Croſs.

§. 2. Thus the Bleſſed *JESUS*, by his Example, has ſhewn us the true and only Path to Heaven, 1 *Pet.* ii. 21. Let us therefore tread in his Steps, and learn to imitate Him in all the different Scenes of his moſt holy and afflicted Life. He went before, that we might follow Him. From whence we may learn, how far they are from the true and right Way, who never regard this bleſſed Pattern, but refuſe to follow it. And if Men will ſtill walk on in Darkneſs, and ſhut their Eyes againſt this Light,

Whoſe Example is the true and only Way to Happineſs.

how great must their Darkness be! The blessed *Jesus* himself calls to them, saying, *Joh.* viii. 12. *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me shall not walk in Darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.*

The momentary Sufferings of Christians shall be rewarded with eternal Joy.

§. 3. All the Sufferings and Calamities of this mortal Life, are not worthy to be compared with the Eternal Glories reserved for them in the World to come; for their Temporal Afflictions are but for a Moment, but their glorious Reward shall endure for ever. And an everlasting Possession is well worth contending for. And couldst thou but for a Moment behold what eternal Joys and Glories they enjoy, who in this Life were exposed to all the Torments and Sufferings imaginable, I question not, but thou wouldest cheerfully submit to them all, and take up thy Cross with Joy, thinking all Things but Dross and Dung, that thou mightest win *Christ*, and be a Partaker of his Glory.

The goodly Prospect hereof represented.

§. 4. Lift up therefore the Eyes of thy Mind to Heaven, and view with St. *John*, Rev. vii. 14. that vast Company *cloathed in white Garments, and following the Lamb.* Of whom this account is given to the inquisitive Evangelist: *These are they that are come out of great Tribulation, and have washed their Robes, and made them White in the Blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve Him Day and Night in his Temple.* These are the proper Meditations for devout Souls. Thus we read of *Moses*, Heb. xi. 24. *By Faith, Moses, when he was come to Years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter; choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, esteeming the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt; for he had respect to the Recompence of the Reward.*

§. 5.

§. 5. Hence we learn, that the Saints in all Ages have eſteemed the Reproach of *the Croſs of Chriſt* as their greateſt Treaſure and Riches. And we may depend upon it, that no Man can be admitted to the Joys of the next World, who has not fought manfully under the Banner of the Croſs in this. And how can we imagine thoſe bleſſed Spirits will own us to be of their Company in Heaven, unleſs we come bearing in our Bodies the Marks of the Croſs of the Lord *Jeſus*? Will they not without this, take us for Strangers and Foreigners?

Afflictions are the Treaſures of the Saints.

CHAP. XLIX.

Conſolations againſt the Fears of Death.

2 TIM. i. 10.

Chriſt hath aboliſhed Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel.

§. 1. THIS Sentence is full of Divine Comfort againſt the Fears of temporal Death. For if *Chriſt has aboliſhed Death*, why ſhould we fear it? And *if Light and Immortality be brought to Light*, why ſhould we not rejoice to paſs through the Grave and Gates of Death, to take Poſſeſſion of them? But ſince there is no Man ſo holy, but that at ſome time or other he is afraid of Death, I ſhall here ſubjoin ſome few *Heads of Conſolation*, which I ſhall divide into two Parts. *The Firſt*, containing thoſe Conſolations which ariſe from *the Benefits of Chriſt's Death and Sufferings*. *The Second*, thoſe that ariſe from the Conſideration

How the Fears of temporal Death are to be overcome.

Heads of Conſolation againſt theſe.

of *the Vanity of the World.* Each of these Parts shall comprehend seven Heads or Arguments of Comfort.

1. *Consolations arising from the Benefit of* Christ's Death and Sufferings.

§. 2. The *First* and most powerful Remedy against the Fears of Death, is the most holy and innocent *Death of Jesus Christ*, by which He conquered and destroyed the Power of Death. Now the Sting of Death consists in the continual Dread and Terror that arises from the Thoughts of the severe Judgment that is to follow. And with this the Soul is oftentimes so afflicted, that it is as it were continually dying, yet cannot die. This is the Sting and Power of Death, yea, is even the second and eternal Death. And this terrible State, the Devil makes yet more dreadful by his diabolical Arts and Stratagems. Upon which account, he is said, *Heb.* ii. 14. *to have the Power of Death*, i. e. to terrifie and torment the Minds of Men with the continual dread and fear of it. This was *David*'s Case, as he complains, *Psal.* lv. 4. *My Heart is disquieted within me, and the Fear of Death is fallen upon me.* So again, *Psal.* xviii. 3, 4. *The Sorrows of Death compassed me, and the overflowings of Ungodliness made me afraid. The Pains of Hell came about me, and the Snares of Death overtook me.* Now the blessed *Jesus* has taken away this Sting and Power of Death, changing it into an easie sleep, a happy Passage, a blessed Rest of Soul and Body. For when the Soul is at rest, the Body sleeps securely, so that the Peace of the Soul gives Peace also to the Body. And in this Sense every true and faithful Christian may be properly said not to tast of Death; according to that Promise of our blessed Lord, *Joh.* viii. 51. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a Man keep my Saying, he shall never see Death.*

His Conquest over Death.

The Peace of the Soul brings Peace to the Body.

§. 3.

§. 3. The *ſecond* Ground of Comfort is, *The Reſurrection of our Bodies.* For *Chriſt* has ſo far deſtroyed the Power of Death, that it not only cannot torment our Souls, but cannot keep even our Bodies in Bondage. For as the Power of *Chriſt*'s Death in us, protects us from feeling the Sting of it; ſo by the Power of his Reſurrection, our mortal Bodies ſhall alſo be raiſed again to a glorious Immortality. 2. *The Benefits of Chriſt's Reſurrection.*

§. 4. (1.) For the Foundation of our Reſurrection, is the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt.* According to that of St. *John*, Chap. xiv. 19. *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* Joh. xi. 25. *I am the Reſurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live.* Job xix. 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day upon the Earth, and though after my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God.* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. *For ſince by Man came Death, by Man came alſo the Reſurrection of the Dead. And as in Adam all died, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* *The Reſurrection of our Bodies, how well founded.* *Chriſt's Reſurrection the efficient Cauſe of ours.*

§. 5. (2.) This is alſo founded upon God's Veracity. *Iſa.* xxvi. 19. *Thy dead Men ſhall live,* Ezek. xxxvii. 5, 12. *Thus ſaith the Lord unto theſe Bones, Behold I will cauſe Breath to enter into you, and ye ſhall live. Behold I will open your Graves, and cauſe you to come up out of your Graves, O my People.* Dan. xii. 2. *And many of thoſe that ſleep in the Duſt of the Earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting Life, and ſome to Shame and everlaſting Contempt.* Joh. v. 25, 28. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, the Hour cometh, and now is, when the Dead ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God: and they that hear ſhall live. The Hour is coming in which all that are in the Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come forth, they that have done good, to the Reſurrection of Life; and* *God's* Truth *engaged for our Reſurrection.*

they that have done Evil, unto the Reſurrection of Damnation Rev. xx. 12. *And I ſaw the Dead both ſmall and great ſtanding before the Throne.*

And the Power of Jeſus Chriſt.

(3.) It is alſo founded upon *the Omnipotence and Majeſty of Jeſus Chriſt.* For as in the Reſurrection of *Lazarus*, he was glorified, when He cried out, *Lazarus, come forth*, Joh. xi. 43. So He will alſo in the laſt great Day, manifeſt his Power and Glory, by ſhewing himſelf to be the Lord of Life and Death, *Rom.* xiv. 9. *Hoſ.* xiii. 14. *I will ranſome them from the Power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death. O Death, I will be thy Plague; O Grave, I will be thy Deſtruction.*

God's Juſtice *engaged alſo for it.*

§. 6. (4.) *The divine Juſtice* is alſo engaged for the Confirmation of this Truth. For as it has received Satisfaction in that threatning Sentence, *Thou ſhalt die*, Gen. ii. 17. So alſo muſt it be fulfilled in our Reſurrection after a compleat Satisfaction for Sin. For when Sin it ſelf is at an end, the Wages of Sin ought to have an end likewiſe. And this is ſtrictly agreeable to the Juſtice of God.

Confirmed by Precedents.

(5.) This is alſo further confirmed to us, by the Examples of *thoſe who have been already raiſed from Death unto Life*: Such was the *Shunamite's* Son, 2 *King.* iv. 35, 37. The dead Body that was raiſed by touching the Bones of *Eliſha*, 2 Kings xiii. 22. The Daughter of *Jairus*, Matt. ix. 25. The Widows Son at *Naim*, Luk. vii. 15. *Lazarus*, Joh. xi. 43. And *Tabitha*, Acts xi. 41.

Witneſſed to by the Redemption of the Body.

(6.) And becauſe *Chriſt* hath redeemed both Soul and Body to everlaſting Life. Whence the Redemption of the *Body* as well as of the *Soul*, is groaned after by the Faithful, *Rom.* viii. 23. and is called alſo the *Adoption.*

(7.) This

(7.) This is beautifully illuſtrated by a Similitude drawn from the Nature of *a Grain of Wheat*, Joh. xii. 24. 1 Cor. xv. 36. *Thou Fool, that which thou ſoweſt is not quickened except it die.* Upon which account, Church-yards and Burying Places are, in the *German* Tongue, called, *God's Ground.* *Illuſtrated by* Nature.

§. 7. A *third* Comfort againſt the Fears of Death is, *the Benefits of Chriſt's Reſurrection*; that is, that eternal, incorruptible, and *immortal State* purchaſed for us by *Jeſus Chriſt*. For as by the Tranſgreſſion of *the firſt Adam*, all his Poſterity died; ſo by the Obedience *of the Second*, they are all reſtored to Life and Immortality. Upon which account it is ſaid, *Rev.* xxi. 5. *Behold, I make all things new.* This renovation conſiſts in an entire freedom from Sin, Miſery, and Death, and is a State of Righteouſneſs, Joy, and Eternal Life. For this cauſe it is alſo called *Paradiſe*, Pſal. xvi. 11. *In thy Preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at thy right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore.* For if it be Paradiſe, it follows, that no Grief, Pain, Sorrow, Crying, or Sighing; no Hunger, Thirſt, Cold, Heat, or any other misfortune, can enter there. For theſe are our Portion in this miſerable Life, but that eternal Life is *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, as we are told by St. *Peter*, 1 Epiſt. i. 4. 3. *The Hope of Immortality.*

§ 8. And this is indeed the moſt valuable Benefit of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection; for by *Chriſt* all Things are renewed and reſtored; ſo that Corruption is changed into Incorruption; that which was Tranſitory, into that which is Eternal; our Filthineſs, into ſpotleſs Beauty; our Grief into Joy, our Sorrows into Triumphs, our Sins into Righteouſneſs, the Divine Anger is changed into Mercy, his Curſes into Bleſſings, our Poverty into Riches, our Diſeaſes into Health, *Which is reſtored by Chriſt's Reſurrection.* *As alſo the univerſal Reſtitution.*

Health, our Contempt into Honour, our Reproach into Glory, our Disquiet into everlasting Rest, our Miseries into Pleasures, our Death into Life. And Death is the Entrance into this blessed State. So that temporal Death is the Gate of everlasting Life.

4. *Prayer a Remedy against the Fears of Death.*

§. 9. The *fourth* Consolation against the Fear of Death is, *Prayer*. So we read of the Son of God, *Luk.* xxii. 44. that *being in an Agony, he prayed more earnestly*. And *Heb.* v. 7. *In the Days of his Flesh, he offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong Crying and Tears, unto him that was able to save him from Death, and was heard in that he feared*. For indeed the Prayers of dying People are strong and vigorous, they proceed from the bottom of the Heart, ascend through the Clouds, and pierce the Ears of the Almighty. *Psal.* cxlv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, yea, all such as call upon him faithfully*. Psal. xci. 15. *I am with him in Trouble, I will deliver him, and bring him to Honour*. Isa. xli. 10. *Fear not, for I am with thee, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness*.

5. *The Glorification of the Body.*

§. 10. The *fifth* Consolation is, *The Glorification of our Bodies*. Phil. iii. 20. *Our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile Body, that it may be like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty Working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself*. And what greater Glory can we conceive, than that our Bodies shall be, not only like the Angels in Heaven, but also like the glorified Body of *Jesus Christ*? 'Twas for this that He shewed us his glorified Body upon Mount *Tabor*, Matt. xvii. 2. that He might enflame us with a Desire of the same Glory. Oh! what glorious Temples of God shall our

our Bodies then be? Of this, the golden Veſſels in the Houſe of God, and the Royal and Prieſtly Garments under the Law, were but a faint Shadow and Reſemblance.

§. 11. The *ſixth* is, *The Preſence and Aſſiſtance of the holy Angels*, to carry our departing Souls into *Abraham*'s Boſome. Our Soul immediately takes flight into the Regions of eternal Glory, and to the Society of bleſſed Spirits. For that is all that is meant by *Abraham's Boſome*. And that reſt of the Soul conſiſts entirely in a *freedom from the Fears and Terrors of Death*, Wiſd. iii. 1. So *Pſal.* cxvi. 7, 8, 9. *Return again to thy Reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord hath rewarded thee: For he hath delivered my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling. That I may walk before the Lord in the Land of the Living.* For then the Soul being delivered from the Chains and Burdens of the Fleſh, will triumph and rejoice like a Priſoner reſcued from a long Captivity.

6. *The Miniſtry of Angels to faithful Souls at their Departure.*

§. 12. The *ſeventh* Comfort is, *the eternal Duration of our future Glory*, Wiſd. v. 16, 17. *The Righteous live for evermore, their Reward alſo is with the Lord, and the Care of them is with the moſt High. Therefore ſhall they receive a glorious Kingdom, and a beautiful Crown from the Lord's Hand.* Rev. vii. 16, 17. *They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the Sun Light on them, nor any Heat. For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the Throne ſhall lead them unto living Fountains of Water, and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* Iſa. xxxii. 18. *My People ſhall dwell in a peaceable Habitation, and in ſure Dwellings, and in quiet reſting Places.* And Chap. lxvi. 12, 13. *I will extend Peace to her, like a River. And as one whom his Mother comforteth, ſo will I comfort you,* Chap. lxv. 13. *My Servants ſhall Eat, and Drink, and Rejoice.* Which Eating and

7. *The Eternity of the Glory to be revealed in them.*

and Drinking, is to be underſtood of their exalted Pleaſure, ariſing from their Viſion of God, 1 *Cor.* xii. 12. *Now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly, but then Face to Face.* 1 Joh. iii. 2. *We ſhall ſee him as he is.* Pſal. xvii. 16. *As for me, I ſhall behold thy Preſence in Righteouſneſs: And when I awake up after thy Likeneſs, I ſhall be ſatisfied with it.* O happy Day, when we ſhall ſee God Face to Face! How ardently did holy *David* long for it, ſaying, *Pſal.* xlii. 2. *When ſhall I come to appear before the Preſence of God?*

Wherein Eternal Life doth conſiſt.

§. 13. In ſhort: The Joy of eternal Life will conſiſt: (1.) In the beatifick Viſion of the Face of God. (2.) In the Preſence of *Chriſt* our Redeemer, in all his Glory and Majeſty: *Joh.* xvii. 24. *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory which thou haſt given me.* (3.) In the moſt exalted Taſt and Enjoyments of all the Gifts, Graces, and Pleaſures of the Holy Ghoſt at the Spring Head, *Pſal.* xxxvi. 10. (4.) In the Society of all the Elect of God, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, and Martyrs. *Iſa.* xxxv. 10. *And the Ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return and come to Zion with Songs, and everlaſting Joys ſhall be upon their Heads, they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and Sorrow and Sighing ſhall flee away.*

II. *Conſolations ariſing from the* Vanity of the World.

Thus much for thoſe Conſolations that ariſe from the Nature, Offices, and Promiſes of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*: I come now to conſider thoſe that may be drawn from the Conſideration of the *Vanity of the World*, and they are likewiſe *Seven.*

Conſid. 1 *We are daily dying Bodily & Spiritually.*

§. 14. *Firſt*, This Life, how great and glorious ſoever it may appear to ſome, is made up of Miſery and Sorrow, *Eccluſ.* xl. 1. *Great Travel is created for every Man, and an heavy Yoke is upon the Sons of Adam, from the Day that they go out of their Mothers Womb, till the Day that*

that they return to the Mother of all Things. And St. *Paul* ſays of himſelf, *I die daily*, 1 Cor. xv. 31. For every Day ſteals away a part of our Life, and as our Years increaſe, our Life decreaſes. So that every moment of our Time is divided betwixt Life and Death. How many various Diſeaſes are there, like ſlow Poyſons, daily waſting and conſuming our Bodies? How are we tormented with Sorrow, broken with Labours, and diſtracted with Care? So that the Wiſeman truly pronounced, that *the Day of our Death, is better than the Day of our Birth*, Eccleſ. vii. 1. And *Job* vii. 1, 2, 3. *Is there not an appointed Time to Man upon Earth? Are not his Days alſo like the Days of an Hireling? As a Servant earneſtly deſireth a Shadow, and as an Hireling looketh for the Reward of his Work: So am I made to poſſeſs Months of Vanity, and weariſome Nights are appointed me.* And Chap. xiv. 1. *Man that is born of a Woman, hath but a ſhort time to live, and is full of Miſery.* But an holy and happy Death puts an end to all theſe Miſeries.

§. 15. *Secondly*, We are expoſed to many and very grievous Sins, from which nothing can deliver us but a happy Death. Thus St. *Paul*, Rom. vii. 23, 25. *I ſee another Law in my Members, warring againſt the Law of my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin which is in my Members. O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* For what is Life but a continued Courſe of Sin? So that, that was an excellent Prayer of one of the Antients, *Lord, let me die, that I may ceaſe from Sin.* And ſince the whole Creation is travelling in Pain, and waiting to be delivered from the Bondage of Sin, into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, *Rom.* viii. 21, 22. how much more ought we to ſigh after it? Not

Conſ. 2. *He that wiſheth to live long wiſheth but to increaſe the number of his Sins.*

Not to mention the Offences and Stumbling-blocks which the World is full of, and which we are continually obliged to see and suffer whether we will or no.

Death a Deliverance from Sin and Misery to the Faithful.

§. 16. Now Death delivers us from all those Evils, according to that of *Wisd.* iv. 7, 10. *Though the Righteous be prevented with Death, yet shall he be at rest. He pleased God, and was beloved of him; so that living among Sinners he was translated; yea, speedily was he taken away, lest the Wickedness should alter his Understanding, or Deceit beguile his Soul. He being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long Time, for his Soul pleased the Lord, therefore he hasted to take him away from among the Wicked.* And these Offences will so increase in the latter Days, that the Souls of the Righteous shall be vexed like righteous *Lot*'s in *Sodom*, 2 Pet. ii. 8. It was this made the wise Preacher say, *Eccles.* iv. 1. *So I returned and considered all the Oppressions that are done under the Sun, and behold, the Tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no Comforter; and on the side of their Oppressors there was Power, but they had no Comforter. Wherefore, I praised the Dead which are already dead, more than the Living which are yet alive.* How many pestilent Errors in Faith, how many Heresies, Superstitions, Sects, false Prophets, false Christs, and false Christians shall over-run the World, *to deceive, if it were possible, the very Elect*, Matt. xxiv. 24. Upon which account, God takes his Faithful out of all these Dangers and Troubles. How many dreadful Mischiefs, and tragical Events, how many Wars, Butcheries, Plagues, and Famines, shall wast the unhappy World in the last Days? Such, and so great, as no good Christian would wish to see or endure.

§. 17.

§. 17. *Thirdly*, All must die without distinction, *Rom.* v. 12. *Death hath passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned.* Since therefore so many holy and great Men, so many Patriarchs, Prophets, and innumerable other righteous Men are dead, who would not willingly follow them? *Take away my Life, for I am not better than my Fathers*, saith *Elisha*, 1 King. xix. 4. *It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after that the Judgment*, Heb. ix. 27. All Flesh is Grass, and all the Goodliness thereof *as the Flower of the Field. The Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it*, Isa. xl. 6, 7. *I am a Stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my Fathers were.* Conf. 3. *The Universality of the Law of Death.*

§. 18. *Fourthly*, No Man dies by chance; but God is the Lord of Life, and He hath appointed the Bounds of his duration. *His Days are determined, the Number of his Months are with thee*, Job xiii. 15. Psal. xc. 3. *Thou turnest Man to Destruction, again thou sayest, Come again ye Children of Men.* Psal. cxxxix. 15. *In thy Book were all my Members written.* Matt. x. 30. *The Hairs of your Head are all numbred.* Deut. xxx. 20. *God is thy Life, and the Length of thy Days.* Conf. 4. *No Man dies by Chance*

§. 19. *Fifthly*, *To die is gain*, Phil. i. 21. We get more than we lose by dying; Righteousness, instead of Sin; Glory, for Misery; Heavenly Riches, for Earthly; instead of the short-lived Friendships and Relations of this World, we gain an eternal, and durable Fellowship and Communion with the Saints in Heaven; instead of this mortal, diseased, and deformed Body, we gain an Heavenly and Glorious one; we change Banishment, for our own Country; Misery, for Peace; and in a Word, this World for Heaven. In short, what is there in this World, that we cannot have infinitely better in the next? If thou art in love with Riches, Honours, Conf. 5. *In what Sense Death may be said to be* gain.

or

or Glory; with Friends, Pleaſures, Peace, or Enjoyments, the Things which ſet all Mankind together by the Ears, all theſe thou ſhalt enjoy to the higheſt Degree in the next World.

Conſ. 6. *Death an act of divine Mercy.*

§. 20. *Sixthly*, Man would be the moſt miſerable Creature in the World, if he were obliged to abide in it for ever. *If in this Life only* (ſaith St. *Paul*,) *we had hope in Chriſt, we were of all Men moſt miſerable*, 1 Cor. xv. 19. Whence it follows, that we are deſigned for a better World. So that in Truth it is a very great Inſtance of divine Mercy, to take us out of this Valley of Tears, and tranſlate us to a better Place, *Iſa.* lvii. 1. *The Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come. He ſhall enter into Peace, they ſhall reſt in their Beds, each one walking in his Uprightneſs*, Rev. xiv. 13. *Bleſſed are the Dead which die in the Lord, even ſo ſaith the Spirit, for they reſt from their Labour.*

Con. 7. *No Entrance but through it into the Kingdom.*

§. 21. *Seventhly*, Since we cannot with theſe mortal and polluted Eyes, behold the Glory of God, nor enter with theſe mortal Bodies into the *New Heaven, and new Earth, in which dwelleth Righteouſneſs*, (2 Pet. iii. 13.) Let us cheerfully put off this earthly Tabernacle, that we may be cloathed upon with our Houſe which is from Heaven. Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, neither can Corruption inherit Incorruption. Great therefore is the Mercy of God, who exchanges theſe filthy Rags, for a *ſhining Garment*, in which we may celebrate the eternal Marriage: a beautiful and *triumphant* Garment, fit to be worn in the everlaſting Sabbatiſm: A *Prieſtly* Robe, with which we may enter into the very Holy of Holies.

A PRAYER.

LORD, let me know my End, and the Number of my Days, that I may be certified how long I have to live. Behold, Thou haſt made my Days as it were a Span long, and my Age is even as nothing in reſpect of Thee: and verily every Man living is altogether Vanity: For Man walketh in a vain Shadow, and diſquieteth himſelf in vain. And now, O Lord, what is my Hope, truly my Hope is even in Thee, my Lord, and my God, my Reſurrection, and my Life! And into thy Hands I therefore commend my Spirit, for I know that I am here but a Stranger and a Sojourner, as all my Fathers were; and that Thou haſt Redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth, that when my Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, I may be received into the Inheritance of Light. Amen.

CHAP. L.

That all the Powers and Influences of this natural World are ſubject to the Faith and Prayers of a true Chriſtian.

JER. x. 2.

Be not diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven, for the Heathen are diſmayed at them.

The Author's Opinion and Cenſure of Judicial Aſtrology.

§. 1. MANY eminent Philoſophers and Divines have written againſt Judicial Aſtrology, and will by no means allow the Heavenly Bodies to have any influence upon the Lives, Manners, or Concerns of Mankind. For this they have produced abundance of very plauſible and ſpecious Arguments, aſſerting the contrary Doctrine to be injurious to the Omnipotence and Providence of God; eſpecially conſidering, that in many Places of Holy Scripture, Aſtrologers are expreſly condemned, and the *Jews* forbid under very ſevere Penalties to conſult, or have any thing to do with them. And I freely acknowledge, that I am of their Mind; when this Science is perverted from its proper Uſe to Idolatry, Superſtition, and impertinent Enquiries into future Events. Such Practices, as they draw Men from a true Faith and Dependance upon God, are directly ſinful, and deſerve the ſevereſt Puniſhments. And it was barely upon this account, that the holy Prophets reproved and derided the Aſtrologers of old; becauſe the *Jews* depending too much upon the Anſwers of theſe Men, were perpetu-

Whytle Uſe of it interdicted to the Jews.

ally prying into the Succeſs of all their Deſigns, by Natural and Aſtrological Enquiries; forgetting that God had particularly choſen that People to himſelf, to be guided, governed, and directed by a particular Way and Method of Providence, not only above, but even ſometimes contrary to the ſtated Rules of natural Agents. Upon this account, the natural Aſtrologer, whoſoever he was, could not foretel the *Jews* any good or evil that was to happen to them. That could only be known by the Spirit of God ſpeaking by the Mouths of his Prophets. So that they had nothing to do but to Fear the Lord their God, to dedicate themſelves entirely to Him, and to direct all their Deſigns and Actions to the Glory of God, according to the Rules of his holy Law.

And to Chriſtians.

§. 2. And the Reaſon is ſtill the ſame to us Chriſtians under the New Teſtament, for we are under the ſole and immediate Government of *Jeſus Chriſt*. He will be their new Heaven, their bright Star to influence, direct, and guide them in all their Ways. Hence we are told, *Pſal.* iv. 3. *The Lord hath choſen to himſelf the Man that is godly; and when he calleth upon God, He will hear him.* Which admirable Oeconomy of God, is at large deſcribed, *Pſal.* cxxxix. So that the Life and Converſation of a good Chriſtian ſhould proceed entirely from God, and the new Nature in him, ſuffering God to direct and guide him as He ſhall ſee fit.

How far it may be True or Falſe.

§. 3. But whether we ſhould for this Reaſon deny all Operations and Influences of the Heavenly Bodies upon the Lives and Affairs of Mankind; or whether the admitting them would be any ways injurious or prejudicial to the juſt Notions of a Divine Providence, I confeſs I cannot yet determine. Certain it is, that God in the Execution of his Will, does always make

That there may be certain Influences of the natural World. Argument 1.

uſe of intermediate Inſtruments. He meaſures the various Seaſons of the Year, by the Revolution of the Heavens, and confines and appropriates all our different Concerns to their proper Seaſons and Periods of Time, *Wiſd.* xi. 22. Whence *Solomon* tells us, *Eccleſ.* iii. 1. *To every thing there is a Seaſon, and a Time to every purpoſe under the Heaven.* And that *particular Time and Seaſon*, as the particular Deſignation of Heaven, ought carefully to be obſerved in every Affair and Action of Life. For if we take an exact ſurvey of the different Events of Humane Affairs, we ſhall quickly find that all Times are not alike Seaſonable for all Buſineſs, nor will be attended with equal Succeſs. And this is what our Lord himſelf tells us, *Joh.* xi. 9. *Are there not twelve Hours in the Day?* As if He had ſaid: *That which has been unlucky or unfortunate at one Hour, may, perhaps, be more lucky and proſperous at another.* God has determined every Deſign of his to a particular Time; and bleſſed is he that regardeth and knoweth the Time of his Viſitation! If the *Jews* had ſo carefully obſerved the ancient Propheſies concerning the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, and his own Sermons and Diſcourſes among them, ſo as to have known the Time of his Coming, and their own Viſitation, it had been well for them, *Luk.* xix. 44. And this prudent and cautious Enquiry into the Times and Seaſons, does rather confirm and illuſtrate the Wiſdom and Providence of God in the Government of the World, than derogate any thing from it. Not to mention in this Place, the many Myſteries pointed out to us in the Revelations of St. *John*, by the Calculation of Times and Numbers.

Argum. 2.

§. 4. *Secondly*, Chriſt himſelf directs us to the *Signs in the Heaven*, Sun, Moon, and Stars, *Luk.* xxi. 25. And he was much in the Right, who

who called the Heavens, *The Mirror of the great World*, in which a wiſe Philoſopher may read the approaching Revolutions of this lower World. So when publick Calamities are at the Door, the Heavens put on Mourning, and by certain Signs and Tokens give warning of the impending Evils. Thus *Iſa.* xiii. 10. *The Stars of Heaven, and the Conſtellations thereof, ſhall not give their Light: The Sun ſhall be darkened in his going forth, and the Moon ſhall not cauſe her Light to ſhine.* And *Ezek.* xxxii. 7, 8. *I will cover the Heaven, and make the Stars thereof dark. I will cover the Sun with a Cloud, and the Moon ſhall not give her Light.* Joel. ii. 31. *The Sun ſhall be turned into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood.* And this is the true Reaſon why God commands them, *Jer.* x. 2. *Be not ye diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven.* as if He had ſaid: *Tho' the Signs of Heaven be never ſo dreadful and threatning, yet ſo long as you ſerve and put your Truſt in me, you have no reaſon to be afraid.* For they that are born of God, and have put on the new Nature, are in a State ſuperior to this Aſtral World; and have no reaſon to be afraid of its Terrors. So ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* cxii. 6. *He will not be afraid of any evil Tidings, for his Heart ſtandeth faſt, and believeth in the Lord.* Of this the very Heathens had a Notion, as appears by that common Saying among them. *A wiſe Man* **ſhall have dominion over the Stars.* For they that are partakers of the new Birth, are exalted above the natural Heavens; they are no longer under the Influence and Dominion of *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, *Mars*, *Sol*, *Mercury*, and *Luna*; but they are the Sons of God, ſtanding in the Life of Faith, by which they conquer the Planetary World, and all its influences; for Faith is the Victory that overcometh the World. On the other hand, they that are ſtrangers to the new

**Sapiens dominabitur aſtris.*

Birth, but live *according to the Fleſh*, they have reaſon to be afraid; for being under the Dominion of the old Nature, they are neceſſarily expoſed to all the evil Influences and Impreſſions ariſing from it.

Argum. 3. §. 5. *Thirdly*, It is undoubtedly certain, that the Eclipſes of the Sun and Moon, and the Appearance of Comets, do portend great Changes and Alterations here below, and do foretel not only the Deaths of illuſtrious Perſons, but alſo the Revolutions, and ruine of Empires and States, with other publick Calamities. Hence that old Saying among the *Heathens*,

In cœlo nunquam ſpectati impune cometæ.
——————— fierce Comets blaze,
Too certain Tokens of impending Wrath.

Which has been abundantly confirmed both by Hiſtory and Experience. It is a memorable Story that is told of *Julius Cæſar*, who having been warned by an Aſtrologer to beware of the *Ides of March*, and meeting him one Morning, ſays merrily to the Aſtrologer, *Well, Spurina, the Ides of March are come*; true, Sir, ſays the Aſtrologer, *but they are not yet paſt*; upon which he left him, and going into the Senate-Houſe, was barbarouſly Murdered.

Argum. 4. §. 6. *Fourthly*, Moſt of the Diſtempers incident to Humane Bodies, both as to their original Cauſes, and Methods of Cure, are *Aſtral*, as is well known to the Learned in that Profeſſion, ſuch are certainly all Lunatick Caſes, ſome kinds of the Epilepſie, the Plague, and many Mercurial and Arſenical Diſtempers; and what influence theſe have upon the Actions and Concerns of humane Life, experience it ſelf convinces us. Upon which account, a certain eminent Phyſician, has aſſerted Aſtronomy to be *the fourth Pillar or Support* of the Science of Phyſick. §. 7.

§. 7. *Fifthly*, Let us here ſubjoin the Words of a very Learned Writer. *It is impertinent* (ſays he) *to pretend that thoſe vaſt heavenly Bodies which are ſo many times bigger than the Earth, ſhould be void of all influential Powers and Operations. Since, as the Philoſophers obſerve, the more perfect the Forms of any Beings are, ſo much the more noble are the Effects and Operations of thoſe Beings whoſe Forms they are. Man is the Centre of this lower World, in whom all the Virtues and Powers of Nature concur and unite.* Argum. 5.

§. 8. Would it not be very abſurd to imagine, that the Firmament has no Power at all to act upon Men, ſeeing Man has the whole Firmament in himſelf, and that the Firmament *of the leſſer World* does, by a certain ſecret Sympathy, conſpire and agree with that of the Greater? Which the true Philoſophers knew to be indiſputably certain. I would not be here underſtood to mean thoſe Operations and Influences, which ſome ridiculous Pretenders to Aſtrology have falſly aſſigned to the Stars, making them to be the ground Work or firſt Principles of their Predictions, which have been ſolidly confuted by many Learned Divines. But this, I ſay, that the uncertain or falſe Prognoſticks of Aſtrologers, are no Objection againſt the Operations of the natural Heaven upon Man, as the Microcoſme or leſſer World. And becauſe ſo many dull Pretenders are ignorant how the Heavenly Bodies act, does it therefore follow that they do not act at all? Thus we might as fairly argue, that becauſe ſome Phyſicians make wrong Applications to their Patients, therefore Medicines are of no uſe in the Cure of Diſtempers, ſo that this or that Simple hath no virtue in them, becauſe Phyſicians do not know what it is, or wherein it does conſiſt. *An Aſtral Firmament in Man, anſwering to that of the Great World.*

The immediate and mediate Operations of God to be distinguished.

§. 9. As for those Places of holy Scripture, in which the Prophets of old condemned and derided Astrological Predictions; it is my Opinion, that we ought to distinguish betwixt the *immediate* Works of God, such, I mean, as are wrought by the immediate Finger of God, and the *mediate*, such as are generally called the Operations or Works of Nature. So then when the *Jews*, by principles of Nature, pretended to enquire into the unsearchable Works of God, it could not possibly be, but that themselves and their Astrologers should be baffled and disappointed. This was the Folly of *Pharaoh* in *Egypt*, and *Nebuchadnezzar* in *Babylon*, when they demanded of their Magicians, an explication of the supernatural Works of God, such as are Dreams, and the Interpretation of them, *Gen.* xli. 8. *Dan.* ii. 27. This was a Work too great and sublime for humene Wisdom; and appertained rather to the Spirit of God, *who searcheth the deep Things of God*, 1 *Cor.* ii. 10. Upon which account, the Prophet *Daniel* excused the Magicians, and interceded with the King, that they should not be put to Death; but he himself explained the Sense and Mystery of the Dream, by the Spirit of the most High God that was in him: As *Joseph* before him had done for *Pharaoh*. This is the true Meaning of that Place, *Eccles.* viii. 17. *I beheld all the Work of God, that a Man cannot find out the Work that is done under the Sun*; that is, a Man by his natural Wisdom cannot discover them, but by the Assistance of the Spirit of God.

The Influences of the Heavenly Bodies not denied but favoured by Scripture.

§. 10. Thus far then we may determine, that the aforecited Places out of the Prophets, do by no means deny the Influences and Operations of the Heavenly Bodies. Moreover, that all these Operations, how strong, powerful, and

and violent ſoever, with all the natural Powers of the Firmament and Elements, are *ſubject to the Faith and Prayer of a Chriſtian.* For he that by Faith is united to *Jeſus Chriſt*, is Lord of all Nature. As it is ſymbolically repreſented to us, *Rev.* xii. 1. *by the Woman cloathed with the Sun, and having the Moon under her Feet.* He, I ſay, that is by Faith united to *Jeſus Chriſt*, is exalted far above all Things; and being tranſlated into Him, cloathed with Him, and made partaker of his Light and Glory, he hath all Nature in Subjection under his Feet. The ſame is in Chriſt *a new Creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. and in Him overcometh all Things, 1 *Joh.* v. 4. *That which is born of God, overcometh the World,* and all that is in the World. And *all things are poſſible to him that believeth*, Mark ix. 23. And Luk. x. 19. *Behold, I give unto you power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the Power of the Enemy*, Pſal. xci. 7, 13. *A Thouſand ſhall fall beſide thee, and Ten Thouſand at thy right Hand, but it ſhall not come nigh thee. Thou ſhalt go upon the Lion and Adder, the young Lion and Dragon ſhalt thou tread under thy Feet.* Pſal. xxvii. 5. *In the Time of Trouble, he ſhall hide me in his Tabernacle; yea, in the ſecret Place of his dwelling ſhall he hide me, and ſet me up upon a Rock of Stone.* Iſa. xliii. 2. *When thou paſſeſt thro' the Waters, I will be with thee; and thro' the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: When thou walkeſt through the Fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt.* Joh. xiv. 30. *The Prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in me.* Joh. xvi. 33. *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.* 1 Cor. xv. 57. *Thanks be to God that giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Rom. viii. 35, 36. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of Chriſt? Shall Tribulation? or Diſtreſs? or Perſecution? or Famine? or Nakedneſs?*

The Influences put under ſubjection to the true Chriſtian.

kedneſs? or Peril? or Sword? I am perſuaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor Heighth, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. In all theſe Things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us.

Inſtances of this Subjection, and of the over-ruling Power of **Faith.**

§. 11. We read, *Heb.* xi. 33. that *through Faith*, holy Men of old ſhut and opened Heaven, quenched the Violence of Fire, made the Sun and Moon ſtand ſtill in the midſt of the Firmament, and ſtopped the Mouths of Lions. Yea, and not only all Nature, but all the Powers of Hell, Sin, Death, and the Devil, are ſubject unto Faith. For Chriſt's Victory is ours, we conquer in Him, and He in us. Thus when, *Luk.* x. 17, 20. the Seventy Diſciples told Chriſt, ſaying, *Lord, the very Devils are ſubject unto us through thy Name.* He anſwered, *Rejoice not in this, that the Spirits are ſubject unto you; but rather rejoice, that your Names are written in Heaven.* For this is your Victory, Strength, Glory, Bleſſing and Praiſe, that through me ye are the Sons of God, and Lords and Heirs of all Things. And in this Senſe, *the Names* of all the Faithful *are written in Heaven*; that is, ſo far as by Faith in Chriſt, Holy, Bleſſed, and Conquerors, joint Heirs with Chriſt, and Lords of all Things. Upon theſe Principles every faithful and wiſe Chriſtian ought to examine, cenſure, and govern his natural Conſtitution, fully perſuading himſelf, that whatſoever Aſtral Impreſſions there may be upon it, He is by Faith, Lord of the Heavens, and *has Dominion over the STARS.*

LUK. xxi. xxxvi.

Watch ye therefore and Pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe Things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of Man.

A PRAYER.

LOrd, let thine Angels tarry round about me, and by thy command, deliver me from thoſe evil Influences wherewith my fallen Nature is ſurrounded; that I may taſt and ſee, how Gracious Thou, my Lord, art, and how bleſſed the Man is that truſteth in Thee, and ſo dwelleth under the Shadow of thy Wings. I will therefore watch, that I may be accounted worthy to eſcape, or at leaſt, to be ſupported under, all thoſe Evils which I am threatned with: And, O that I could Watch and Pray always, that I might be made worthy, by thy Grace, to eſcape all thoſe Things, and ſo to be cloathed with the Sun, and made a Child of Light in the Regeneration, as to have the Moon and Stars put in Subjection through Faith, to thy Name which thou haſt placed in me: That ſo I may not faint in the Combat, tho' even the Powers of the outward Heavens ſhould all fight againſt me in their Courſe; but that I may be able to ſtand before Thee, and mightily to prevail by the Revelation of thy Power in me, all the contrary Influences ſent forth againſt me being ſubdued by a ſtrong Influence from thy Throne of Grace, to the Manifeſtation of thy Kingdom and Glory in my Soul, mercifully renewed after thy Image. And I humbly beſeech Thee, now and always pitifully to conſider therefore the Infirmities of my Nature, and the Power of them that fight againſt thy Servant;

vant; and for the Glory of thy Name, to turn from me those Evils which I most justly have deserved, and for which there is a Ground, from the present Constitution of this World, until I be redeemed from the Curse thereof, thro' the Sanctification of my Spirit, Soul, and Body, and a thorough Renovation of my whole Nature, according to thy Likeness, in Righteousness, Peace, and the Joy of the Holy Ghost. Which do Thou mercifully grant me, for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate; who with Thee, in the Unity of the same Holy and Eternal Spirit, is worshipped and glorified for ever, World without end. Amen.

Epilogue to the Second Book.

The Author's *Apology to the* Lutherans *for his Printing these Books,*

I Think it proper here to advertise the Christian Reader, that the main Design of these my Books is, the Propagation and Defence of our holy Reformed Religion, as it is chiefly taught in the Churches of the *Ausburgh Confession*, and since repeated in the Articles of our Union, commonly called, the *Formula Concordiæ*, (to which I have given, and do give, my unfeigned Assent and Consent, and by which I would have my Writings explained) but more particularly to promote therewith *Purity and Holiness of Life*. For the Orthodoxy of our Faith will avail but little, without the Holiness of our Lives. Not that I would discourage any one from defending the Purity of Faith and Doctrine; yet, methinks the greatest Zeal ought to be employed in the Reformation of our Lives and Manners. For what signifies

ſignifies great Knowledge, without Piety? He certainly does God more acceptable Service, who makes Men *Good*, than he that makes them *Learned*. Many contend earneſtly for the *Doctrines of Jeſus Chriſt*; but very few follow his Example, or tread in his Steps; as I have ſhewn at large in my *Preface* to the firſt Book, and in the *Epilogue* to the Fourth and Laſt.

He excuſes the Prolixneſs with which ſome charged him.

Now if any one think I have been too tedious in my Explication of the *Chriſtian Life*: I anſwer: There is nothing more Copious than the Iniquities of the preſent Age, nothing more extenſive than the Corruption of our Nature. Moreover, that the Redemption of Mankind is a great Work, a ſpatious Field; and the Path of the Croſs through which we muſt enter into it, is a long and tedious Path, and cannot in few Words be fully deſcribed. But if any however that are in Love with Brevity, think I have been too prolix, and had rather ſee the Whole of the Chriſtian Religion in Epitome; let ſuch read in the *Firſt* and *Second* Books the Chapters about *Repentance, Faith, Charity, Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, and the Croſs.* Nevertheleſs, if thou canſt perſuade thy ſelf to read the whole Work throughout, I am apt to think thy Time and Labour will not be loſt to thee.

All Honour, Praiſe, and Glory to God alone.

A Pray-

A PRAYER for obtaining true Reſt and Tranquillity of Soul.

LORD JESU CHRIST, Thou Eter-
Iſa. ix. 6. *nal and only* Prince of Peace! *Thou moſt*
bleſſed, and trueſt Reſt of faithful Souls! Thou
Matt. xi. 28. *haſt ſaid,* Come unto me all ye that Travel and
are heavy Laden, and ye ſhall find Reſt to
Joh. xvi. 33. your Souls. In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation, but in me ye ſhall have Peace.

Alas! How often have I ſought for reſt in this World, and the Things of the World, but have not found it! For my Soul being Immortal, cannot reſt or be ſatisfied with any thing but Thee alone. O immortal God, Thou, and Thou alone, art the Reſt of our Souls. The World, and all that is in it, is haſtening to decay, they all wax old as doth a Garment, and as a Veſture
Iſa. li. 6. ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be chang-
Pſ. cii. 27, 28. ed; but thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall not fail. *How then ſhall my Soul find reſt in ſuch fleeting and changeable Things? Even as Thou my Almighty Creator couldſt reſt in no Creature but*
Gen. ii. 2. *in Man; (for when Thou hadſt made him,* Thou didſt reſt from thy Works,) *ſo the Soul of Man can find no reſt but in Thee.*

O God, my Soul cannot be ſatisfied but in Thee,
Pſal. xvii. 15. *the ſupreme Good.* My Soul hungreth and thirſt-
Pſal. lxiii. 2. eſt after Thee, *and cannot reſt till it poſſeſs Thee. Upon which account, Thou, my deareſt Jeſus, haſt*
Joh. vii. 37. *invited us, ſaying;* Whoſoever thirſteth, let him come unto me. *Thou art the Fountain of my Being, and ſay unto it.* Riſe up my Love, my fair
Cant. ii. 14. one, and come away, O my Dove, that art in the Clifts of the Rock, in the ſecret Places; i. e. *in the Wounds of Jeſus Chriſt.*

O

O Thou Rock of my Salvation! in which my Soul truſteth and is at reſt. Thomas, *thy beloved Apoſtle, could not reſt till he had thruſt his Hands into the Place of the Nails, and into thy wounded ſide. From theſe Wounds flow Fountains of Salvation, Streams of Peace, and Rivers of Divine Love.* Joh. xx. 25, 27.

O Lord Jeſu, *how ardent is thy Charity! how pure, how free from deceit! how perfect! how ſpotleſs! how great!* how exalted! how profound! Eph. iii. 18. *in a Word, how ſincere, how hearty is thy Love! Suffer, I beſeech Thee, my Soul to reſt in this thy Love, in thy Heart, which is burning with the pureſt Flames of Love. Here let my poor Soul reſt free from Fear of Danger or Diſquiet. In Thee let all my Senſes reſt, that I may hear Thee ſweetly ſpeaking, O Thou higheſt Love! Let my Eyes behold Thee, O Thou Celeſtial Beauty! Let my Ears hear Thee, Thou moſt Harmonious Muſick! Let my Mouth taſt Thee, Thou incomparable Sweetneſs! Let the refreſhing Odours of Life breath upon me from Thee, Thou moſt noble Flower of Paradiſe! Let my Arms hold Thee faſt in the Embraces of Love, O moſt delicious Spouſe! Let my Heart rejoice in Thee, my true Joy! Let my Will deſire Thee alone, Thou only Joy of my Heart! Let my Underſtanding know Thee alone, O Eternal Wiſdom! Laſtly, let all my Deſires, all my Affections, reſt in Thee alone, O Bleſſed Jeſu, who art my Love, my Peace, and my Joy!*

Take out of my Heart every thing that is not thy Self. Thou art my Riches in Poverty; Thou art my Honour in Contempt; My Praiſe and Glory againſt Reproaches; my Strength in Infirmity; and in a Word, my Life in Death. And how then ſhould I not reſt in Thee, who art my All in all? *My* Righteouſneſs *againſt Sin; my* Wiſdom *againſt Folly;* Redemption *from Condemnation;* Sanctification *from my Uncleanneſs. Come unto me, and let* 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. Rom. viii. 1.

my

my Soul reſt in Thee, keep thy Sabbath in me, that I may hear what Thou wilt ſay in me! That I may perceive Thee living in me, O my Life! And be comforted, refreſhed, and enlightened by thy Preſence, O Thou who art my Comfort, my Delight, my Joy, and my everlaſting Light!

Let me, I beſeech Thee, ſurrender my whole Heart *to Thee, ſince Thou haſt given me all thine.* Prov. xxiii. 26. *Let me go out of my ſelf, that I may enter into Thee. Let me cleanſe my Heart, and empty it of the World, that Thou mayeſt fill it with thy Celeſtial Gifts! O Jeſu, the Reſt of my Heart, the Sabbath of my Soul! Lead me into the Reſt of a bleſſed Eternity,* where there are Pleaſures at thy right Hand for evermore. *Amen.* Pſal. xvi. 11.

The End of the Second Book.

28 IV 58

28 JY 58



Ex Uno VERBO Omnia: Et UNUM loquuntur Omnia.

OF

True Chriſtianity.

The THIRD BOOK.

St. *Bernard* in his Eight Points, *&c.*

(a) *My Son, enter into thine own Heart, withdraw thy ſelf as much as poſſible from all external Things, and keep the Eye of thy Mind in Purity and Peace. Preſerve thy Underſtanding free from all earthly Images, and thy Will from all carnal Affections, by fixing them entirely upon* the Chiefeſt Good. *Keep thy Memory continually raiſed above the World, by the Con-*

(a) Fili mi ad *cor* tuum redeas; ab omnibus quantum poſſibile eſt, teipſum abſtrahendo, mentis oculum ſemper in puritate & tranquillitate cuſtodias. *Intellectum* a FORMIS RERUM INFIRMARUM reſervando *voluntatis* affectum a curis terrenorum penitus abſolvas SUMMO BONO amore fervido ſemper inherendo. *Memoriam* quoque jugiter ſurſum elevatam habeas, per contemplationem Divinorum ad ſuperna tendendo; ita ut *tota anima* tua cum omnibus potentiis ſuis & viribus *in Deum collecta*, unus fiat ſpiritus cum eo; in quo ſumma perfectio vitæ cognoſcitur conſiſtere. *Otto Punct. perveniend. ad Vit. Spiritual.*

templation of Divine Things; ſo that thy whole Soul with all its Powers and Faculties being recollected in God, may become one Spirit with Him: Which is the higheſt Degree of Perfection.

Again,

(b) *It is not Study and Reading, but the Imitation of* Jeſus Chriſt, *that makes us good Chriſtians.*

(*b*) Chriſtum ſequendo citius apprehendere quam *legendo.*

The Introduction.

Different Stages of the ſpiritual Life.

§. 1. AS there are different Stages and Degrees of Age and Maturity in the Natural Life; ſo there are alſo in the Spiritual. It has its firſt Foundation in *ſincere Repentance*, by which a Man ſets himſelf heartily to amend his Life. This is ſucceeded by *a greater Illumination*, which is a kind of middle Stage betwixt the Rudimental and Perfect State; here by Contemplation, Prayer, and bearing the Croſs, a Man is daily improving in Grace, and growing up to Perfection. The laſt and moſt perfect State, is that which conſiſts in a moſt *firm Union*, which is founded in, and cemented by *pure Love*. This is that State which St. *Paul* calls, *Eph.* xiv. 13. *The perfect Man*, and *the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.*

1. Purgative.

2. Illuminative.

3: Unitive.

The Deſign of the Three firſt Books.

§. 2. To explain theſe *three* different *States*, is the Ground and Deſign of theſe *three Books*; ſo that I cannot but think, that (taking in the Book of Prayer) the whole Body of Chriſtianity,

nity is contained and explained in them, as far as is neceſſary; though perhaps not ſo perfectly, as might be wiſhed. As for the *fourth* Book, I thought fit to add it to the reſt, to ſhew how harmoniouſly the Holy Scripture, the Perſon of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the humane Nature, and the whole Creation, conſpire and agree together. And how all Things centre in the One, Eternal, and Living ORIGINAL, which is GOD.

All things reduced to one ſupreme Original.

§. 3. But that the Reader may not miſtake the End and Deſign of this *third Book*, he muſt know, that it is to inſtruct us, how *to ſeek and find the Kingdom of Heaven within us.* That in order to this, he muſt devote and conſecrate his whole Heart and Soul; that is, not only his *Underſtanding*, but his *Will* and Affections alſo to God. It is a Notion too prevailing at this Day, that Men are very good Chriſtians, if by Reading or Diſcourſe they have got ſome kind of ſpeculative Knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*. This is that which generally paſſes under the Name of *Theology*, or *Divinity*, which the generality take to be nothing elſe than a Science, or a ſet of Doctrines or Opinions to be learnt only in Theory, not regarding the other moſt noble Faculty of the Soul, *viz.* the *Will*, the *Affection*, the *Love*. Both theſe, both, I ſay, muſt be conſecrated to God and Chriſt; and when thou haſt done this, thou mayeſt aſſure thy ſelf, that thou art entirely dedicated to Him. There is a wide Difference betwixt the Underſtanding by which we know, and the Will or Affection by which we love the Lord *Jeſus*. For our Love may be perfect, though our Knowledge be not ſo.

The Kingdom of Heaven within the Soul.

§. 4. To know Chriſt with our Underſtanding, and not to love Him, is nothing Worth. On the other hand, *it is infinitely better to love Him,*

Better to love God, than be able to diſpute about Him.

Him, than to be able to diſpute and diſcourſe about Him. Let us learn therefore ſo to ſeek Chriſt with our Underſtanding, that we may love Him with the whole Strength and Power of our Will. By this we may be aſſured, that we know Him truly, if our Knowledge be productive of Love. Otherwiſe, we may be ſaid indeed to find Him, and know Him, but it will be to our Condemnation. So our bleſſed Lord tells us, *Matt.* vii. 21. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Moreover, there are two Ways of obtaining Wiſdom and Knowledge. The one, conſiſts in *Reading* and *Diſputing*; the other, in *Prayer*, and *Charity*. The one makes us *Learned*, the other, *Holy*. And between theſe there is a great Difference. The former, if they be *Learned*, and not lovers of God, breath nothing but Pride and Arrogance: The latter, are Humble, and think meanly of themſelves. If thou take the *firſt Method*, thou wilt never find thy internal Treaſure; if thou take the latter, thou canſt not be diſappointed. And this is the Argument of the *third Book*.

Two Ways of Attaining divine Knowledge.

The inward Treaſure: And how the Kingdom of God is within us.

§. 5. And now how Glorious, how Noble, and Happy a Thing is it, that our chiefeſt and moſt valuable Treaſure, *viz. The Kingdom of God*, is not to be ſought without, but to be found within us, that we continually carry it about with us, and that neither Men nor Devils can rob us of it? And that this is not to be obtained by profound Learning, skill in Languages, or variety of Books, but by a devout and humble Spirit. Here then let us exerciſe our greateſt Care and Diligence, and turn our Thoughts inwards to that hidden, celeſtial and eternal Good, that divine, that incomparable Treaſure. Why do we ſpend our Time and Pains in the Purſuit of External Comforts, whilſt ſo great a Trea-

Devotion and Reſignation the proper Means of obtaining the Divine Treaſure.

Treaſure as the Kingdom of God, with all its Bleſſings, lies neglected within us? For in our Heart and Soul is the true School of the Holy Spirit, the true Habitation of the bleſſed Trinity, the very Temple of God, where He deſires to be worſhipped *in Spirit and Truth*, Joh. iv. 23.

God dwelleth in the enlightened Soul.

§. 6. For though God by his univerſal Preſence is in all Things, though not included in them, but after an incomprehenſible manner filling Heaven and Earth; yet in a particular and proper Senſe, He dwells in the Soul of the enlightened Chriſtian, taking up his Seat and Habitation there, (1 *Cor.* vi. 19. *Iſa.* lxvi. 2.) as it were in his own Image and Similitude. Here He operates in a Way ſuitable to himſelf, anſwering and aſſiſting every groan and ſigh of the devout Soul. For how is it poſſible He ſhould deny any thing to him with whom, and in whom, He lives? In a word, there is nothing more pleaſant and agreeable to divine Love, than to communicate it ſelf to all that unfeignedly ſeek it.

The Quiet of the Soul to be preſſed after.

§. 7. But in order to this, the Soul muſt be at quiet and at reſt, which it can never be till it be diſingaged from the World. This the *Heathens* themſelves were ſenſible of, and accordingly one of them tells us, *That the Soul is uncapable of Wiſdom till it is compoſed and at reſt.* There is a fine Paſſage in St. *Cyprian* to this purpoſe. *This*, ſays he, *is the true Reſt and Security of the Soul, when the Man being delivered from the Storms and Tempeſts of the World, raiſes his Heart and Eyes unto God, and endeavours to be like Him. By this he comes to underſtand, that all which the World calls beautiful and valuable, is truly hidden in his own Soul, ſo that he neither expecteth nor deſireth any thing from without. O celeſtial Treaſure, to be delivered from the Chains and Fetters of*

St. Cyprian's Saying, concerning the Reſt of the Soul.

this World! O chief and boundleſs Good, not to be obtained by any Labour of ours, nor by our Intereſt with the great Men of this World; in ſhort, not to be gained by our Induſtry and Study; but ſolely and entirely, by the Grace and Favour of God. For as the Light of the Sun proceeds from it ſelf, the Day breaks from it ſelf, the Fountain ſprings from it ſelf, the Rain falls from it ſelf, and waters the Earth; ſo the Holy Spirit deſcends freely into that Soul, which has rais'd it ſelf from the World unto God. Theſe are the pious and profound Words of St. *Cyprian*, which are a ſort of Epitomy of this Book.

One Glympſe of God's Preſence more deſirable than all the Pleaſures in the World.

§. 8. In a Word, this introverſion of the Soul, very often gives us a view of the inward Treaſure of our Souls, though but for a Moment. And one ſuch Moment vaſtly exceeds all the Happineſs of Heaven and Earth, and all the Creatures. Hence St. *Bernard* truly obſerved: *That the Soul which has once learnt to deſcend into its ſelf, to ſeek the Face of God, and taſt the Sweetneſs of his Preſence in the inmoſt Receſſes of the Heart, will think it more tolerable to ſuffer even the Pains of Hell for a Seaſon, than after having taſted the experimental Sweetneſs of this Divine Exerciſe, to return again to the Pleaſures, or rather, to the weariſome Gratifications of the World and the Fleſh, ariſing from the inſatiable Cravings of the inferior Appetites.* In ſhort, ſuch a Soul not only finds the higheſt Happineſs, by finding in its ſelf the Preſence of God; but alſo the deepeſt Miſery, in being deprived of it. By this the true Chriſtian is fully inſtructed, that by dying to the World, he lives in God, as the Fountain and Spring of Life; and on the other hand, that the more he lives to the World, ſo much the more he dies unto God. That the Soul that is dead to the World, truly lives unto God, and is his Darling and Joy, or, as the

An Obſervation hereupon of St. Bernard

To die to the World, is to live to God.

Song

Song of *Solomon* expreſſes it, *better than the Taſt of Wine, or the Smell of all Spices*, Cant. iv. 10. on the other hand, the Hearts of worldly Men are but ſour Grapes, *as the Grapes of Sodom, which are as Gall, and their Cluſters bitter*, Deut. xxxii. 32.

§. 9. Now the Soul that is dead to the World, may be diſcovered by theſe Tokens. *Signs of a Soul dead to the World.*

" It reſigns its own Will to the Will of God " in all Things; it ſuppreſſes Self-love; it mor- " tifies the Deſires of the Fleſh; it avoids world- " ly Pleaſures; it eſteems it ſelf as the vileſt and " meaneſt of all Men, and is not apt to judge " or cenſure his Neighbour, ſuch an one re- " fers all his Injuries and Wrongs to the God " of Righteouſneſs, to whom Vengeance belong- " eth; he is not puffed up with the Applauſe of " Men, nor dejected with their Revilings; in " a Word, he bears every thing with Patience, " without repining or complaining. A nota- ble Inſtance of this reſigned Temper we have in King *David*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 15. when he poured out before the Lord the Water of the Well of *Bethlehem*, which he had ſo earneſt- ly longed for, and which three mighty Men of his Hoſt had fetch'd for him with the Hazard of their Lives. This was an action of great Self-denial, in that he would not gratifie his deſires by taſting that for which three Men had ventured their Lives.

§. 10. Behold, *in this Mortification conſiſts the true Perfection of the Chriſtian Life.* For Perfection is not, as ſome Fancy, a ſublime or ſpiritual kind of Reliſh for celeſtial Enjoy- ments; but it is the denying our own Will, the Contempt of the Pleaſures and Profits of this Life, the Acknowledging our own Vileneſs, conſtant Reſignation to the Will of God, and unwearied Love and unfeigned Compaſſion for *Perfection, wherein it conſiſts.*

our Neigbour. In a Word, it is that Degree of Love, which, allowing for Humane Infirmities, thinks of nothing, ſeeks nothing, deſires nothing but God. This is that true Chriſtian Virtue, true Liberty, and true Peace, which conſiſts in overcoming the Fleſh and fleſhly Deſires, as will appear in this *third* Book, and by the Experience of thoſe that have tried it. For which great End, I beg the Divine Grace both upon the Reader and Writer, that it may pleaſe Him to begin, ſtrengthen, and perfect his good Work in us, to the Praiſe and Glory of God. *Amen.*

CHAP. I.

Of the great and internal Treaſure of the enlightened Chriſtian.

1 COR. vi. 19.

Know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, which is in you, which ye have of God.

The Chriſtians inward Treaſure.

§. 1. THAT the Hearts of the Faithful, are *the Habitation of the ever bleſſed Trinity*, is largely atteſted in Scripture, as (*a*) *Lev.* xxvi.

(*a*) I will ſet my Tabernacle amongſt [*or in the midſt of*] you. So *Ezek.* xxxvii. 26, 27. I will ſet my Sanctuary in the MIDST of them for evermore: My Tabernacle alſo ſhall be with them: Yea, I will be their God. *Compared with* Rev. xxi. 3. *and* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 16.

xxvi. 11. (*b*) Iſa. xliv. 3. (*c*) lvii. 19. (*d*) Joel ii. 28. (*e*) Joh. xiv. 23. (*f*) xvii. 23. (*g*) Rom. viii. 18. (*h*) 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12. (*i*) iii. 16. (*k*) vi. 19. (*l*) 2 Cor. vi. 16. (*m*) Gal. ii. 20. (*n*) Eph. iii. 17. (*o*) iv. 25. (*p*) Col. iii. 10. (*q*) 1 Joh. iv. 13. But alas! who is there that underſtands, values, or enquires after this immenſe and hidden Treaſure? Wherefore, I thought it worth my while to explain at large the ſpiritual and heavenly Dignity of the true Chriſtian, and to inſtruct every one how to ſeek and find this ſublime Treaſure in themſelves. The Foundation of this

Few know any thing of this Treaſure.

(*b*) I will pour My SPIRIT upon thy Seed.

(*c*) Peace, Peace to him that is NEAR, ſaith the Lord.

(*d*) I will pour out MY SPIRIT upon all Fleſh, *i. e. My Spirit ſhall be in them as a* vital *Principle, or as a Superior Soul and Life to the* Rational *Soul.*

(*e*) We [*the* Father *and the* Son] will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

(*f*) I IN them; and Thou IN me: that they may be made perfect in ONE.

(*g*) The Glory which ſhall be revealed IN us.

(*h*) The Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God: Now we have received (not the Spirit of the World, but) the Spirit of God.

(*i*) Know ye not that ye are the TEMPLE of God: and that the Spirit of God dwelleth IN you?

(*k*) Know ye not that your Body is the TEMPLE of the Holy Ghoſt, which is in you?

(*l*) Ye are the TEMPLE of the Living God; as God hath ſaid, I will dwell IN them, and walk IN them.

(*m*) I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth IN me.

(*n*) That Chriſt may dwell IN your Hearts by Faith. *Compared with* Gal. ii. 20. The Life which I now live in the Fleſh, I live by the *Faith* of the Son of God.

(*o*) That ye PUT ON the New Man.

(*p*) Have PUT ON the New Man, which is renewed in Knowledge after the [*Tri-une*] of Him that created him.

(*q*) Hereby know we that we dwell IN Him, and He IN us, becauſe He hath given us of his SPIRIT.

this Doctrine has been already laid down and demonstrated in the * *first* Book, proving how *the Word of God, through Faith, does exert its power in the Heart of Man.* And in the *second* Book * it has been shown how God discovers himself to the devout Soul, as the highest Love, Goodness, Beauty, Holiness, and Wisdom, *&c.*

*See Chap. V

* *See* Part II. *from* Chap. VII, *to* XIV.

The Knowledge of this internal Treasure not to be had but by the Sabbath or Rest of the Soul.

§. 2. But as this high Treasure cannot be worthily perceived or understood, but in *the still and quiet Sabbatism of the Soul*, in which the Holy Spirit teaches us inwardly by the Meditation of the Word, in which He enlivens and enlightens us; in which *He searcheth all Things, even the Deep things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. Upon this account, I say, we must first of all learn, how to bring the Soul to that peaceable and quiet State of internal Rest. And something has been said by way of Foundation, upon this Head, in the Treatise *of Prayer*, inserted in the *second* Book; which comes now more fully and perfectly to be handled in this *third* Book. Namely, how this hidden Treasure, this Pearl in the Field of our Hearts, is to be sought for by *introversion* into our selves, or rather, into God. And this is the inward Sabbath of an Heart *cleansed and purified by Faith*, (Acts xv. 9.) and enlightened by the Holy Ghost. From this Treasure of the Spirit and Kingdom of God hidden in the faithful Soul, sprang the Wisdom of all the enlightned Souls, Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, that have ever been since the Foundation of the World. This Pearl then is worth looking after, this Field is worth Tilling, and this *Gift* of the Spirit and divine Grace *must be stirred up* in us, as a spark of Fire, which by continual Application of Breath, is blown up into a bright Flame, as St. *Paul* observes, 2 *Tim.* i. 6.

Whence the true divine Wisdom proceeds.

§. 3.

§. 3. But that thou mayest more fully and distinctly apprehend in the Entrance of this Book, which relates entirely to the inward Man, how the Children of God are to be drawn from the exterior to the interior Man, or the ground of the Heart, that they may search, know, purifie, and change it; and keep their spiritual Eyes fixt upon God, and his Kingdom in the inmost Recesses of the Soul. That the Reader, I say, may more fully understand this, I shall first of all more generally in this Chapter, and afterwards more particularly, touch upon and explain the several Heads of this Doctrine, referring ever now and then to the Theology of Doctor *John Thauler*, and quoting him as often as I can in his own Words. And here I cannot but remark: That as the Holy Scripture, as great and sacred as it is, regards the Heart of Man; so likewise the whole Divinity of *Thauler* aims at the inward Man, the ground of the Heart, and deepest Recesses of the Soul. Hence it is, that he again and again inculcates: *That God, and the Kingdom of God, are purely to be enjoyed, sought for, and found in the ground of the Heart*: that is, *whatsoever the Holy Scripture, and its true Interpretation, discovers outwardly, all that ought to be really, spiritually, and truly felt and experienced in the ground of the Soul.*

How to come to the ground of the Heart.

Thauler's *Divinity respects the inward Man.*

§. 4. And this cannot be without *a frequent Introversion into the Centre of the Heart.* So that the more frequently and deeply a Man retires from the World, so much the closer he is united to God. And the oftner the devout Christian practises this Exercise, so much the clearer will the Kingdom of God, and this hidden Treasure, be manifested in his Soul. And he that does not perceive in himself these Fruits of the Spirit and new Birth, will never be one jot more acceptable in the sight of God for all his

The farther from the World, the nearer to God.

Great Gifts are nothing worth without the inward Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

his boasted Professions of Religion; but shall be reckoned among those of whom Christ says, *Matt.* vii. 21. they shall say in the last Day, *Lord, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy Name?* For it is not the *external Appearance*, but the *internal Reality*, that will avail in the Sight of God; not that which consists in the *Letter*, but that which flows from the *Spirit*, and returns to it again. This is the true Ground of the Distinction * aforementioned, betwixt one *taught by the World*, and him that is *taught of God*; i. e. betwixt a *Learned Man*, and a *Holy Man*. The *Learned Man* is instructed outwardly by the Letter; but the *Holy Man* inwardly by God, by the Holy Ghost, *by the Unction which teacheth all things*, 1 Joh. ii. 27. The Wisdom of *the Learned* consisteth in Words; the Wisdom of *the Holy Man* in Power. *For the Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power*, 1 Cor. iv. 20.

The Letter and the Spirit

The Difference between a Learned Man and a Good Man.

*See Introduction §. 4.

A Particular Account *of the internal Treasure.*

§. 5. But forasmuch as a general Account of this will not be sufficient for the Simple and Unlearned, to bring them to this fundamental Knowledge of themselves, and a true Relish of those more solid Principles of Theology which arise from thence; I shall therefore descend to a more particular Explication, and desire them to observe the (*a*) *Five* chief Heads of the Catechism,

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(*a*) The *Five* great Catechetical *Points*, as they regard both the *Exterior* and the *Interior* of a Christian Man, are these following.

I. The Baptism *by Water*, and the Baptism *by Spirit*: Or the outward and visible *Signs* of the Covenant in Baptism, and the inward spiritual *Grace* of it, according to the *Name* and *Nature* of a Christian, expressed by one or the other of these.

II. The Faith of *Humane Assent*, and the Faith of Divine *Operation*: Or an Historical and *Opinionative* Faith, and a Living and *Experimental* Faith. III.

techism, and to remember that they are not only to be learned externally, but to be applied and experienced internally. So for instance, if you should say you believe that God delivered *his Law* upon Mount *Sinai* written upon Two Tables of Stone; that this Law is the Will of God, which every good Man is obliged to obey. You do well to believe this; but this Faith profiteth little, unless God himself be pleased to *write his Law in your Heart*, Jer. xxxi. 33. and accomplish his Will in you; but this can never be done, unless, according to your baptismal Obligation, *you dedicate your whole Heart to God*, and offer up your Will to Him, that his Will may be fulfilled in you. The Holy *Psalmist*, who well knew the Dignity and Necessity of this divine Operation, spends his whole cxix Psalm in earnest Prayers to God that He would vouchsafe to guide, direct, and govern him according to his Law and Testimonies, that this sublime and heavenly work might not by any Means be stopped or hindered in him.

The Exterior and Interior must be united

The whole Soul must be offered up to God.

§. 6.

III. The Law of *External Obedience*, and the Law of *Internal Liberty*, which is the perfect Law of LOVE: Or the Commandments written on Tables of *Stone*, and those written on Tables of *Flesh* by the Finger of God.

IV. Prayer of the *Lips*, and Prayer of the *Spirit*: Or the *Body* of the Sacrifice, and the *Soul* of it.

V. The Outward and Visible *Communion of the Church*, and the Inward and Spiritual *Union with* CHRIST: Or the sensible Feeding upon the *Sacramental Elements*, and the mystical Feeding upon the very *Body and Blood* of our Lord, and so drawing in by Faith his very *Life and Spirit*.

The true Foundation of Chriſtianity.

§. 6. So in like manner, if you believe *that Chriſt is your Righteouſneſs*, your Life and Bleſſedneſs, (1 Cor. i. 30.) you certainly do well, *For other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. iii. 11. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we may be ſaved*, Acts iv. 12. Yet remember withal, that this will avail but little, unleſs you have Chriſt within you; that is, unleſs you lay hold on Him inwardly by Faith, and make him, both as to his Perſon and Offices, your own. For if Chriſt be yours, it follows, that all Things which are God's are alſo yours; and that if He had Ten Thouſand Worlds and Kingdoms full of Righteouſneſs and Bleſſing, yet by Faith thou art entitled to them all, for the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is greater than all theſe. So in like manner, though the Guilt of Ten Thouſand Worlds lay upon thee, yet ſhould it not be able to hurt thee. This then is the Treaſure which thou haſt within thee, as our Lord tells us, *Luk.* xvii. 21. *The Kingdom of God is within you*: that is, *Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. xiv. 17.

Chriſt muſt ſpeak, ſhine, and live in us

§. 7. Moreover, if thou ſay: Thou believeſt that Chriſt is the *Eternal Word of the Father*; that He is the true Life and Light of Man; thou doſt well; but then thou muſt take care, that this Word ſpeak *in thee*, that this Light ſhine *in thee*, that this Life live *in thee*. For unleſs thou haſt this inward Treaſure in thy Soul, and be united to Chriſt by a living Faith, every thing elſe ſhall avail thee nothing. Again, thou thinkeſt thy ſelf obliged in Duty and Intereſt, *to pray to God, to give Him Thanks, and to praiſe his Name*, Pſal. xcii. 1, 2. and in this, thou judgeſt right. But take care withal, that Chriſt himſelf pray *within thee*, and the Holy Spirit groan *within thee*, Rom. viii.

And the Holy Spirit muſt pray in thee.

viii. 26. For as He is *the Spirit of Grace and Supplication*, (Zech. xii. 10.) ſo in order to make thy Prayers effectual, it is neceſſary, that He alſo pray in the Cloſet of thy Heart, *the Temple of Spirit and Truth.* And if this be not done, thy Prayers are all but vain. Thou believeſt that in Baptiſm, *Thou art made a Member of Chriſt, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*; thou doſt well! But unleſs thou find in thy ſelf the Fruits of Baptiſm; ſuch as newneſs of Life, the Unction of the Spirit, and divine Illumination, thy Baptiſm ſhall avail thee nothing. So if thou believeſt according to the Words of St. *Matthew*, Chap. xxvi. 26. that in the external Sacrament *of the Lord's-Supper*, thou receiveſt the true and real Body and Blood of Chriſt, thou doſt well: But if thou doſt not alſo eat it inwardly and ſpiritually, thou wilt not only loſe all the Benefits of that Inſtitution, but doſt alſo *eat and drink condemnation to thy ſelf*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. Laſtly, if thou ſayeſt, that Chriſt was the true *Lamb of God* offered for us upon the Croſs, and that thou believeſt this, *Joh.* i. 20. yet conſider what good can this Faith do thee, unleſs the ſame Lamb of God become the daily Food and Nouriſhment of thy inward Man? From all this it appears, that thy Treaſure ought to be *within thee*, and that unleſs thou ſeek it in *thine interior*, thou ſhalt never find it.

Spiritual Eating is neceſſary in the Lord's-Supper

A PRAYER.

My Heart ſaith unto thee, O God: I ſeek thy Countenance; yea, it is thy Countenance, and the Light thereof, that I ſeek. Now

then

then teach my Heart, I beſeech Thee, my Lord God, where and how it may ſeek Thee, and where and how it may find Thee. Lord, if Thou be not here, where ſhall I ſeek Thee when Thou art gone? Or if Thou be every where, why ſee I not Thee here? Certainly Thou dwelleſt in unapproachable Light. And how ſhall I come at Thee then? Or who ſhall lead me and bring me thither, that I may ſee Thee there?

For when I ſeek Thee, my God, I ſeek a certain Light above all Lights, which no Eye can comprehend: a Light which ſhineth in the Darkneſs of my Nature, and is the Light of Life both to Men and Angels. O lift Thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon me, my Lord and my God, that I may live. Too late indeed have I ſought Thee, the Light of my Mind, the Treaſure of my Soul, the Life of my Life, the Spirit of my Spirit: Yet will I not give over ſeeking Thee, till I find Thee. Thou waſt within me, and without, and there I ſought Thee, and I imprudently ruſhed againſt thoſe good Things which Thou haſt made. Thou waſt with me, and yet I was not with Thee. Theſe Things held me far from Thee, which could not be without Thee. For I went all about ſeeking Thee, and forſaking my ſelf for all Things. Then came I again to my ſelf, and entered into my ſelf, and ſaid to my ſelf, what art thou? and what is the Fountain of thy Being, and what manner of Treaſure is that which is hidden in thee? Verily, I am nothing without Thee, the Light and Life of the World, and the Foundation of every Being. Thou only art my Fountain, and Thou art the hidden Treaſure in my Soul to be revealed. O reveal thy Self unto my Heart, that I may know Thee to be my God and my Lord, through thy Son Jeſus Chriſt whom Thou haſt ſent, and who ſaith unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

A true and lively Faith, and introverſion into our Selves, the only Means of attaining to this inward Treaſure.

ISA. xlvi. 8.

Bring it again to Mind, O ye Tranſgreſſors.

§. 1. THE trueſt Way of Attaining to this Divine inward Treaſure is, by *a true and living Faith.* And though we have already in *the firſt and ſecond* Books treated largely of this Heavenly Virtue, with all its Powers and Properties, how it ought to cleave unto Chriſt, to reſt and depend upon Him; yet we muſt here reſume it again, and ſhew of what Uſe and Advantage it is, in the Matter before us. The Property of a true and living *Faith* is, *To cleave unto God with our whole Heart; to put our whole Truſt in Him; to depend upon Him; to dedicate and reſign our Selves entirely to his Mercy and Goodneſs; to be united to God; and to enjoy Him in the internal* Reſt *and quiet* Sabbatiſm *of the Soul.* True Faith prefers nothing before God; it makes Him the *true Object* of all its Deſires, by unfeigned Abſtraction from all created Comforts. In a word, it places its chief, eternal, infinite, and perfect Good in Him alone, who is the true Fountain of all Good, whether in Heaven or Earth, in Time or Eternity, and all for *Jeſus Chriſt*'s ſake, *who is the Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, Heb. xii. 2. and this is that Faith which leads us to our *inward Treaſure*, which is our chiefeſt Good.

Faith the way to find this inward Treaſure.

The Property of Faith.

Faith brings the Soul to true Peace.

Inſtances of this Faith.

§. 2. *David* was an inſtance of this: He was full of this Faith, as we find, *Pſal.* lxxiii. 25. *Whom* (ſays he) *have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I deſire in Compariſon of thee.* Such was the Faith of *Mary* the Siſter of *Lazarus*, when ſhe ſat at *Jeſus*'s Feet, and heard his Word with greedineſs, *Luk.* x. 39. For Faith, as has been obſerved, brings the Soul into the true *Sabbath* of the Heart, into a State of divine Quiet and heavenly Reſt, in which God delights to manifeſt himſelf. This was the occaſion of thoſe Words of our Lord to *Martha*: *Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things; but one thing is neceſſary: And Mary hath choſen that better part, which ſhall not be taken from her*, Luk. x. 42. But what is that better Part, but only God in *Jeſus Chriſt*? For by this Faith, which opens the Heart, and makes it fit to receive the Spirit of God; by this Faith, is that better part choſen. By this Faith it is, that the whole ever-bleſſed Trinity enters into the Heart, and takes poſſeſſion of it, *Eph.* iii. 17. *Joh.* xiv. 23. This is *that better part* which we ought all to chooſe; *viz.* Eternal Life and Bleſſedneſs. In this one Article is contained the whole Sum of Chriſtian Religion. This is the Fountain and Original of Charity, and of all Virtues. For Faith produceth Love; Love produceth Hope; and Hope, Patience; Patience worketh Meekneſs; and Meekneſs, Humility; Humility produceth the Fear of God; and the Fear of God teacheth us to pray to Him, *to crucifie the Fleſh*, Gal. v. 24. *to deny our Selves, to hate our own Life, and to deſpiſe the World*, Matt. xvi. 24. Upon which account St. *Joh.* 1 Epiſt. v. 4. calls Fath, *the Victory that overcometh the World.*

God in Chriſt is the higheſt Treaſure.

Faith is the Victory that overcometh the World.

§. 3.

§. 3. And this was that one thing which our Lord recommended to the rich young Man in the Gospel, *Luk.* xviii. 18. when he asked Him, saying, *Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal Life*? When He had first commanded him to keep the Laws of God; he answered, *All these have I kept from my Youth up. Jesus hearing him, said, One thing lackest thou yet, Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the Poor, and come, follow me, and thou shalt have Treasures in Heaven.* In which Words, God directs him to choose that *One Thing*, that better Part, by Faith; and by this forsaking himself and his worldly Possessions, to return to God the true Fountain and Centre of his Being and Happiness. From this *one thing* proceeds the whole Christian Life, and all the Commandments, like a Stream from its Fountain, not by compulsion or violence; but from Love and freedom of Spirit. *For it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, according to his good Pleasure*, Phil. ii. 13. Neither will He own any thing in us as his, which himself has not wrought. So that here is no need of Laws, no need of Commands or Prohibitions. For Faith, by its free Motion and Spirit, does every thing in us that is necessary to be done: that is, it surrenders it self freely and entirely to God, and to the Operations of his Grace. And this is what the Prophet *Isaiah* means, when he invites us, Chap. lv. 1. *to come unto God, to buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price.*

The Life of Faith, the great thing recommended.

The one thing necessary.

§. 4. Faith then, is the only Means of Attaining to this inward Treasure, whilst it keeps a Sabbath of Rest unto God, *in every Soul that is recollected into its self.* For as the Motion of the Heavens is therefore the most Noble and the most perfect, because it ends in it self, and

How the Treasure is found by Faith in Self-recollection.

returns to its Beginning; ſo the Life of Man may then be accounted moſt Excellent and Perfect, when it is continually returning back to its Original, which is GOD. And this a Man does, when he enters deep into himſelf, having recollected all the Powers of his Underſtanding, Will, and Memory, and emptied them of the World, and all the Luſts of the Fleſh; offering up his Soul, with all its Affections, to God, by the Holy Ghoſt, and celebrating an eternal Sabbath in his Preſence. Then it is that God begins to operate in him. He waits for ſuch a Frame of Spirit in us, and rejoices to finiſh his work within us. For ſo great is the Love of God towards us, ſo ardent is his Affection, as if his Divinity it ſelf could not conſiſt without us. As if He ſhould himſelf ceaſe to be, unleſs He could diſcover the Abyſs of his Divinity in us, and transfuſe the overflowing Fulneſs of his Eſſence into us. In a Word, this is what the Holy and Ever-bleſſed Trinity labours after, (if I may ſo ſpeak) that it may be as intimately united to us, as it is (*a*) *in it ſelf*. So that the moſt acceptable Service a Man can do unto God, is to keep his Heart ſo quiet and ſtill, that God may reſt, and manifeſt himſelf in it.

We muſt return to our Beginning.

God operates in him that is empty of the World.

God deſires our Salvation.

§. 5.

(*a*) Which muſt neceſſarily be underſtood *according to the Meaſure* and Capacity of a Creature, even as we are commanded to be *Perfect* as God is perfect. For the Union of God with the Soul, is to be more intimate than the Union of the Soul with the Body, and no leſs intimate than that of the FATHER with the SON, and of the SPIRIT with them both, that is, by a mutual Permeation; ſo far as a finite and infinite Spirit can mutually permeate each other by a central Love; and have mutual conſciouſneſs by the Unity of Spirit.

§. 5. For all that God requires, in order to accompliſh his work in us, is an humble and quiet Spirit. And whenever He finds ſuch an Habitation, there He dwells with an high Manifeſtation of his Wiſdom and Power. The Eternal Wiſdom of God cannot unite with the Wiſdom of Man; but when the Humane Soul is entirely ſubmitted unto God, then does God entirely reſt in her. But if thou wilt engage thy Will, thy Underſtanding, Memory, and Affections in the Service of thy own fleſhly Mind, then are they no longer proper Inſtruments for the Work of God. For in every Union of two Beings, it is ſuppoſed, that one muſt of Neceſſity be *Active*, and the other *Paſſive*. But God is an infinite, and eternally active *MIND*, an eſſential pure Act; perpetually operating in thee, unleſs hindred by thee. This may be illuſtrated by the following Similitude: As the Eye cannot fix upon any Object, nor receive any Impreſſions from it, unleſs it be free from all other Images: (for otherwiſe one will hinder the other) So the Soul, with all her Powers, Underſtanding, Will, Memory, and Appetite, can receive no impreſſions or influences from God, if it be not empty and diſingaged from the World. The Ear cannot receive or enjoy the ſweeteſt Muſick, whilſt it is employed and filled with other Sounds or Noiſes: So neither can the Soul receive the divine Sweetneſs, whilſt it is clogged and loaded with created Comforts. So then the more a Soul withdraws it ſelf from the World, ſo much the nearer it approaches unto God. The more it renounces the Pleaſures of the Fleſh, the nearer it comes to the Participation of the *Divine Nature*. 2 Pet. i. 4.

God operates in the Humble and Quiet Soul.

We muſt be Paſſive that God may act.

An abſolute Neceſſity of the Soul's being emptied, in order to be filled with the Treaſure of God.

§. 6. This I take to be a certain Principle, that *Nature filleth all things, and cannot admit a Vacuum.* So if a Man will empty himſelf of the Love of the World and himſelf, with all his Paſſions and Affections for worldly things, God will infallibly fill his Soul with divine Grace, Love, Wiſdom, and Knowledge. But if thou art full of worldly good Things, thou canſt not at the ſame Time be full of Heavenly ones. When *Abraham*, at the Command of God, went from his own Country and Kindred, then was he enlightened from above, *Gen.* xii. 4. xiii. 1. Our carnal Affections, Self-Love, Self-Will, and Self-conceit, with all our Inclinations to the Profits and Pleaſures of this World, are to us as ſo many near Friends and Relations; and it is hard to Fleſh and Blood, to part with them. But how hard ſoever it be, this is the firſt Step, this is the very Gate that leadeth to this hidden Treaſure, this Pearl of great Price: Of which our Lord ſpeaks, *Matt.* xiii. 46. *That the Merchant having found one Pearl of great Price, went and ſold all that he had, and bought it.* And this is that which he means, *Mark* x. 29, 30. *Verily, I ſay unto you, that there is no Man that hath left Houſe, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my ſake, but ſhall receive an Hundred fold, and everlaſting Life.*

We muſt leave all for Chriſt's ſake.

Wherein the Virginity of the Soul conſiſts.

§. 7. Now what are our Brethren and Siſters in a ſpiritual Senſe, but our carnal Luſts, and corrupt Inclinations, which we muſt be emptied of, if we expect to be filled with the Fulneſs of God. For as the bleſſed *Mary* was an immaculate Virgin, (and ſo always to continue) when ſhe conceived our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, Luk. i. 27. So muſt every Soul be an unſpotted Virgin, free from all Pollutions of the World, in order to this *ſpiritual* Conception of Him. A

Soul

Soul thus pure and unspotted is, *as the King's Daughter, all Glorious within*, Psal. xlv. 10. enriched with hidden Treasure. But how can the Soul be married to Christ, that is betrothed to the World? *I am come* (saith our Blessed Lord, *Luk.* xii. 49.) *to send Fire upon the Earth.* This is the Fire of Divine Love. And Oh that it would so burn in us, as to consume all our Dross of worldly Passions and Affections! that nothing might live and move in us, but the Pure and Holy Love of God! He adds, *Ver.* 51. *I come not to send Peace, but a Sword.* And would to God this Sword of the Holy Spirit might so mortifie and destroy all our carnal Concupiscence, that God alone might move and operate in us!

The Fire of divine Love must burn up our carnal Concupiscence

§. 8. But perhaps you will say, that you are so much taken up with the Business of the World, that you cannot be so recollected as you ought; if so, my Advice is, that you set apart some little Corner of your House, and some little Portion of your Time, either by Day or Night, to retire into your self, and pour out your Soul to God, in the Words of St. *Austin*; *Lord, my God, be pleased to enter into Covenant with me, that I may die entirely to my self, and thou mayest live in me; let me keep Silence in my Self, and do thou speak within me; let me rest from all Things, that thou mayest operate in me.* Amen.

None to be excused from holy Retirement and Recollection.

CHAP. III.

That our whole inward Treaſure, *viz.* the Preſence and Communion of the Bleſſed Trinity, and the Kingdom of God, conſiſts in FAITH.

EPH. iii. 16, 17.

That God would grant to you, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward Man; that Chriſt may dwell in your Hearts by Faith, that ye may be rooted and grounded in Love.

A Chriſtian's great Duty is to get himſelf rightly inſtructed in the Nature *and* Uſe *of Faith.*

§. 1. A Chriſtian ought to employ his greateſt Care and Diligence, *in Learning the true Nature and Uſe of Faith.* It is Faith that unites us to Chriſt, and admits us into all the Felicities of the Kingdom of God. Upon which account it is called, *Heb.* xi. 1. *A Subſtance, the Subſtance of things not ſeen.* For our whole Chriſtian Life conſiſts in a living and operative Faith, not in outſide Shows, nor painted Images of Virtue. In a Word, it is Faith alone that can deliver us from our bondage of Corruption and Miſery, and bring us into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. Whence at our firſt Admiſſion into the Chriſtian Church by *Baptiſm*, through which, as through a Gate, we enter into the Fold of Chriſt's Sheep, Faith ſeems to be the firſt Step or ground-Work of the whole. *He that Believeth and is Baptized, ſhall be ſaved*, Mark xvi. 16. And St. *Paul*, Rom. x. 9, 10. *This is the Word of Faith*

Faith which we Preach, that if thou believe in thine Heart, thou shalt be saved, &c. But as the Nature of Faith may be better known by its Fruits and Properties, I shall briefly speak to Eight of them in this Chapter. *Properties of Faith.*

§. 2. *The First* of these is, *a spiritual Release* from Sin and Death, from the Devil, from Hell, the Curse of the Law, the Mosaick Types and Ceremonies, and lastly, from the Commands and Traditions of Men. For as nothing can be more intolerable to a Christian Soul, than to be forced to bear the fiery Darts of Satan, and the Tyranny of Antichrist, by which the Conscience is fettered and entangled with traditional Precepts and Rules, as with Cords and Chains: So nothing can give it greater Quiet, Peace, and Comfort, than to be delivered from this Servitude of Sin, Satan, and Humane Traditions, into a *true Freedom and liberty of Conscience*, which Liberty is nothing else but a true and saving Faith. For by this Faith we are entitled to *Jesus Christ*, and all the Treasures of his Grace, particularly Reconciliation with God, Remission of Sins, the Holy Spirit, and Eternal Life. 1. *Spiritual Liberty.*

§. 3. He that has this Faith, cannot be hurt by Sin, the World, Death, the Devil, or Hell it self. He hath Christ dwelling in him, who is his Righteousness against Sin; his Life against Death; his Help against the Devil; his Heaven against Hell; his Victory over the World; his Blessing against the Curses of wicked Men; his Happiness, against all the Miseries of this World; his Liberty, from all the vain Traditions of Men. Which our blessed Lord has briefly summed up in this one Sentence, *Joh.* viii. 36. *If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed.* Whence it appears, that Christ is the Whole of Faith, and the Sum and Completion of all

all our Hopes and all our Bleſſedneſs. So that Faith gives Quietneſs to the Soul, Peace and Liberty to the Conſcience; freeing it from all Fears and Terrors, and making it reſt joyfully and quietly upon God.

2. *Union with Chriſt.*

§. 4. (2*dly*,) *By Faith the Soul is united to Chriſt*, as a Bride with her Bridegroom. *Hoſ.* ii. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in Righteouſneſs.* The Conſequence of this Eſpouſal, is a Communication of all good Things, yea, and of the Croſs it ſelf, ſo that all that Chriſt has, belongs to the Soul, and all that the Soul has, belongs to Chriſt. As Chriſt then has all celeſtial and eternal Gifts, ſuch as *Wiſdom*, *Righteouſneſs*, *Sanctification*, *Redemption*, *Bleſſedneſs*, and *Eternal Life*, 1 Cor. i. 30. yea, is himſelf all theſe; the Soul therefore is entitled to them all. And on the other hand, as our Soul has nothing but Sin, Uncleanneſs, Calamity, Miſery, Sin and Death, Chriſt has taken to Him all theſe; beſtowing his good Things upon us, and taking our Sins and Miſeries upon himſelf.

The Effects of ſuch Union.

§. 5. But as the good Things of Chriſt are Eternal and Omnipotent, ſo they root out and deſtroy all that Sin, Death and Miſery that is in us. For the eternal and invincible Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, is ſo much Superiour to the Power of Sin in us, that it utterly deſtroys and breaks it in Pieces; and by this means, the Soul is delivered from its own Sins, and cloathed with the Righteouſneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt*, Iſa. lxi. 10. and ſurely this is a bleſſed Exchange! When a Man changes Sin for Righteouſneſs, Death for Life, a Curſe for a Bleſſing, and eternal Miſery for eternal Bleſſedneſs. So then *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, ſeeing that their Sins are ſwallowed up in his Righteouſneſs. For if as St. *Paul* ſays, 1 *Cor.* xv. 54. *Death is ſwallowed up in Victory*, it will follow, that Sin alſo muſt be ſwallowed up. §. 6.

§. 6. Hence (3*dly*,) it follows, that by Faith our Souls *are aſſured of everlaſting Happineſs.* *I am perſuaded* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *that no Creature can ſeparate me from the Love of God*, Rom. viii. 38. Iſa. xxviii. 16. *Behold I lay in Zion for a Foundation a tried Stone, he that believeth ſhall not make haſt.* And Chap. lv. 3. *I will make with you an everlaſting Covenant.* Chap. liv. 10. *My Kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee.* 3. *Aſſurance.*

§. 7. Hence (4*thly*,) ariſes *the Victory of Faith* over Sin, Death, Hell, and the World. 1 *Joh.* v. 4. *That which is born of God, overcometh the World: Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?* In which Words, the *Original* of Faith is diſcovered, that it proceedeth not from the Powers of Nature, but *that it is the Work and Gift of God*, Joh. vi. 29. And that Regeneration is a real, divine, and ſupernatural Work, according to *Pſal.* cx. 3. *The Dew of thy Birth is of the Womb of the Morning.* And as this new Birth is in all reſpects ſuperior to Nature, therefore it cannot be hurt by any Violence or Aſſaults from the World; for though a Chriſtian be never ſo much deſpiſed and abuſed by the World, yet is he in Chriſt a glorious and triumphant Conqueror. *Rom.* viii. 37. *In all theſe things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us.* 4. *Victory over the World.*

§. 8. Hence alſo ariſes, (5*thly*,) *the Glory of Faith*, which is twofold: The one *Spiritual*, and *Inviſible*; The other, *future*, viſible, and glorious in the World to come. Now Faith makes us Partakers of both thoſe Kinds of Glory. So then as the Majeſty of Chriſt, conſiſts in *a Kingdom*, and *High-Prieſthood*; ſo alſo He makes us *Kings and Prieſts* unto God. An Honour, which 5. *Glory.* *The Kinds hereof.*

which St. *Peter* speaking of, 1 Epist. ii. 9. can hardly find Words to express. *But ye*, says He, *are a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People.* Moreover, the Glory of Christ's Kingdom consists in this, that it is *Eternal*, and all the Blessings and Benefits of it are Eternal: Eternal Grace, everlasting Righteousness, unfading Consolation, endless Life, Joy, Peace, and Blessedness that endure for evermore. What good could we expect from a Temporal Prince? All the World it self, and all its Blessings decay and perish, and there is no trust in Princes, nor in any Child of Man. But Christ is our *Eternal King*; and all his Favours and Blessings endure to Eternity. The *spiritual Kingdom* then of a Christian consists in this, that by Faith he is spiritually exalted above all things; that nothing can hurt or hinder him, in the great Affair of his Salvation. Yea, all things are subject unto him, and work together for his good, as we are told, *Rom.* xiii. 28. *All things work together for good, to them that love God*: Even Life, and Death; the World, Hell, and the Devil himself.

The Eternity hereof.

1. *The* Regal *Glory.*

§. 9. Hence it appears how glorious, how *illustrious*, how extensive this *spiritual Dominion* of a Christian is, that all things, whether Good or Evil, are forced to contribute to his spiritual Good, so soon as he is possessed of Christ, and Christ of him. For the whole Treasure and Hope of a Christian is, Christ apprehended by Faith. O the precious Liberty of a Christian! O the mighty Power of the inward Man! For as the Liberty, Righteousness, and Blessedness of a Christian, as also his Slavery, Sin, and Misery, are not external Things; so it follows, that no external Thing, nothing but the meer Grace and Power of God, can justifie, sanctifie, or glorifie a Man. What though the

Body

Body enjoy Liberty, Health, and Strength, and Eat and Drink well, will the Soul be one jot the better for this? If the Body be Impriſoned, Sick, Weak, Hungry, and Thirſty, will the Soul be the worſe? Not at all. In a word, nothing that is external can make the Soul either happy or miſerable, whilſt ſhe preſerves her inward Treaſure, and is true to her ſpiritual Liberty.

2. *The* Sacerdotal *Glory.*

§. 10. So alſo in reſpect of her (*a*) *ſpiritual Prieſthood*, the Soul is out of Danger from any thing that may happen from without. For its Sacrifices, Prayers, and Devotions, are ſpiritually performed by Faith, without any neceſſary dependance upon external Things; as Time, Place, Garments, or Temples. Again: The Soul is no way the better for all the Pomp of Ceremonial Circumſtances; ſuch as Images, Robes, Churches, external Faſts, oral Prayers, and other outward Works. Theſe are not efficacious or powerful enough to lead the Soul into the Paths of Righteouſneſs and Liberty. For all theſe an Hypocrite may do, without any benefit to his Soul. For there is nothing either in Heaven or Earth in which the Soul can live, nothing that can beſtow upon her Evangelical Righteouſneſs and Liberty, nothing in which ſhe can reſt with Comfort, but CHRIST alone, on whom by Faith ſhe comfortably and joyfully depends. This is what our Lord himſelf tells us, *Joh.* xiv. 6. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* And Matt. xi. 28. *Come unto me, and*

(*a*) N. B. This *Spiritual* Prieſthood of a divinely Illuminated Soul, muſt here be underſtood as always under the Regulation of the Great High-Prieſt in the Heavens, and in due Subordination to all his *Inſtitutions*, nor without the ſpecial Guidance of his Word and Spirit.

and ye ſhall find reſt to your Souls. So that the Soul that is by Faith united unto Chriſt, ſtandeth in need of nothing; for in Chriſt ſhe poſſeſſeth all Things, Food, Joy, Peace, Light, Knowledge, Righteouſneſs, Truth, Wiſdom, Liberty, Comfort, Bleſſedneſs, Life, and what not? So that *Chriſt is all in all*, as the Apoſtle tells us, *Col.* iii. 11. And whatſoever external Rites and Ceremonies we may be obliged to for the ſake of *Peace*, *Order*, and *Uniformity*, we may be ſatisfied, that, *to the Pure, all Things are pure*, Tit. i. 15. And our Lord tells us, *Joh.* xv. 3. *Now ye are clean, through the Word which I have ſpoken unto you.* So that nothing can pollute and defile the Soul, but Infidelity, and the Fruits and Conſequences of it.

6. *The Renovation of the whole Man.*

§. 11. The *ſixth* Property *of Faith* is, *The Renovation of the whole Man.* It kindles in him the Fire of *divine* Love, furniſhes him with all Chriſtian Graces, and Works of Mercy; not as if it *merited* any Thing from God, but only as it renders the Soul acceptable to Him. *Pſal.* l. 14. *Offer unto God the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving, and pay thy Vows to the moſt High.* So that *Faith* immediately begins a new Life in Man, and quickens the Word of God within him. For all the Holy Scripture is contained in Faith; as therefore the Word of God is Holy, True, Juſt, Living, Spiritual, Free, and full of all Good; ſo alſo doth it make all thoſe who receive it in Faith, Holy, Juſt, True, the *Children of God, throughly furniſhed unto every good Work.*

7. *The Subjection of Love.*

§. 12. Though the true and ſaving Faith triumphs over the World and the Devil; yet is it of ſuch a Nature, *that in pure Love, it makes it ſelf Servant unto all, ſubmitting it ſelf to all for God's ſake.* It conſiders ſeriouſly with it ſelf, that *Jeſus Chriſt* and all the Heavenly Graces are freely given it by God, ſo that it ſtands

in

in need of no worldly Thing in the Concern of Salvation: And with all, *that nothing can separate him from the Love of God*, Rom. viii. 38. and that nothing in this World can hurt him. When a Man, I say, endued with a lively Faith, considers all this, he cannot but acknowledge, that in meer gratitude and respect to God, *he is obliged to do for his Neighbour, as Christ hath done for him.* As if he should say: *All my Gifts and Graces, my Wisdom, my Understanding, my Riches, my Comfort, are all my Neighbours, as freely as Jesus Christ by his infinite Mercy has bestowed them on me.*

8. *Triumph under the Cross.*

§. 13. The *Eighth* Property of Faith is, *That it Conquers and Triumphs over every Cross, making it supportable to Humane Nature.* For we find *more Comforts in Christ* by Faith, than we leave in forsaking the World for his sake: More *Honour*, than the united Malice of the World can take from us. In Him we meet with so much *Love*, that we shall not regard the Hatred and Enmities of Men: So much Blessing, that all the Curses in the World cannot injure. So much Joy, that all the World cannot make us sad. In a Word, if it were possible for us to be Slain and Murdered Ten Thousand times over, yet *Christ* remains, and will for ever continue to be our Lord, and our everlasting Life, infinitely to be preferred before this short and perishing Life.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How the faithful Soul ought to ſeek God in it ſelf; and the bleſſed State of a Soul united to God.

JOHN xvii. 26.

I have declared to them thy Name, that the Love wherewith Thou haſt loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Two Ways of ſeeking God.

§. 1. THERE are two Ways of Seeking after God, the one *External*, and the other *Internal*. The *Firſt* is *the Active Way*, when Man ſeeks after God. The *Second* is the *Paſſive*, when God ſeeks after Man. *In the outward* Way, we ſeek God by all the Religious Exerciſes of a Chriſtian Life; as Faſting, Prayer, Retirement, Meekneſs, according as we are moved by God, or led by our ſpiritual Guides and Paſtors. *In the Inward, we enter into the ground of our Hearts*, attending upon the Revelation of the Kingdom of God which is within us, *Luk.* xvii. 21. And if the Kingdom of God be in us, it follows, that God himſelf alſo is in us, and more intimately united to the Soul than ſhe is to her ſelf. And ſuch a Treaſure as this within us, ought carefully to be heeded and attended to. The Soul that is entred into this inward Way, muſt entirely reſign and ſubmit it ſelf to all the Diſpenſations of Providence both inward and outward, muſt perfectly reſt in Him, and be content to be, as God ſhall appoint, Poor, or Rich; Cheerful, or Sad; Dry, or Devout.

God is nearer to the Soul than ſhe is to her ſelf.

The Soul muſt be fully reſigned.

§. 2.

§. 2. By this means the Soul is cleanſed from all created Images that may croud into it from without. And when it is thus ſtripped of all rational, ſenſible, and created Things, and every thing which is not God, ſhe comes at laſt into her own Ground and Centre, and there with a pure Eye diſcovers the eſſential Light and Preſence of God; but before this Treaſure can be obtained, every thing elſe muſt be forſaken. Bleſſed and truly Happy are they that find it. For being entirely diveſted of all creaturely Affections, they live in a conſtant Union with God.

And cleanſed from all Images.

How to enter into the Ground of the Heart.

§. 3. And now, if a Man could with his bodily Eyes take a View of ſuch a Soul as this, he would ſee the moſt beautiful Creature in the World, ſhining forth in all the tranſcendent Beauties of Holineſs. Such a Soul is united to God, and by conſequence a partaker of his Glory, not by Nature, but by Grace. It deſires nothing either in Time or Eternity but God alone, ſeeking nothing for its own ſake, either ſpiritually or naturally. On the other Hand, could we but ſee with our bodily Eyes, a Soul ſunk in the Love of it ſelf and the Creatures, polluted all over with the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, and all its corrupt Thoughts and Imaginations externally figured by viſible Characters and Impreſſions, neither Earth nor Hell could furniſh a more dreadful Monſter, a more diabolical Spectacle than this. But in the laſt great Day, when the *Hearts and Conſciences of all Men* ſhall be laid open, (1 Cor. iv. 5.) and the inward Eye opened, that every one ſhall have a full View of himſelf, then ſhall the impure Soul ſee his ſecret Abominations, and find in himſelf an eternal Spring of Sorrow, Miſery, and Torment.

The Miſery of the Damned, whence it proceeds.

Whence the Happineſs of the Bleſſed proceeds.

§. 4. On the other Hand, the pure and divine Soul ſhall for ever contemplate in it ſelf the Preſence and Kingdom of God, whom ſhe ſhall for ever ſee as He is, and by virtue of her union with Him, poſſeſs and enjoy Him as her own for ever. And he that rightly underſtands and conſiders this union of the Soul with God, ſhall experimentally underſtand that Expreſſion of St. *Paul*, Rom. viii. 39. *That neither Heighth nor Depth can ſeparate us from the Love of God.*

The inſeparable Union of the bleſſed Soul with God.

For if it were poſſible, that ſuch a Soul could be thruſt down into the Regions of the Damned, yet could it not be excluded from the Preſence and Kingdom of God, to which it is moſt intimately united. On the other Hand, ſhould a damned Spirit, or the Devil himſelf, be admitted into the Regions of the Bleſſed, yet could they not be exempt from the Torments of Hell, which they continually carry about them.

CHAP. V.

How a Man may be drawn unto God. Of Poverty of Spirit, and the Degrees of Humility.

LUK. xviii. 14.

He that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.

Humility the Way to know God.

§. 1. MANY are *the Means* which Men make uſe of to come to an union with God; ſuch as Reading, Hearing, and other external Exerciſes of Religion. But in good Truth, next to that ſaving Faith which purifies the

the Soul from the Love of the Creatures, (as has already, * and ſhall be more fully yet ſhewn) there is no better or eaſier Method than that of *true Humility*. But that does not conſiſt in Words, or in any external affected Behaviour; but is fixed in the bottom of the Soul, ſo that the Man upon all Accounts, both natural and ſpiritual, reckons and eſteems himſelf as *nothing*; and being thus *poor in Spirit*, (Matt. v. 3.) he values neither Wealth, nor Honour; Body, nor Soul; Peace, nor Joy; nor any thing in the World, in compariſon with his Duty, and the Glory of God. Yea, and if it ſhould pleaſe God, for his further Purification and Humiliation, yet to inflict even the Pains of Hell for a Seaſon upon him, (as upon ſome of the antient Saints, who cried, and were heard, as out of the Belly thereof,) he would moſt cheerfully and contentedly ſubmit to them, eſteeming the Will of God as the only Meaſure and Standard of his Duty and Happineſs.

** See* Chap. ix.

What true Humility is.

§. 2. This is that true *Poverty of Spirit* which diſpoſes a Man cheerfully to part with or ſubmit to any thing according to the Will of God; after the Example of our Bleſſed Saviour, who not only *did*, but *ſuffered* the Will of his Father, (*Matt.* xxvi. 39.) and voluntarily choſe the accurſed Death of the Croſs, and therefore was highly exalted by God, *Phil.* ii. 9. Whoſoever has this Humility, is truly *poor in Spirit*; and though he were bleſſed with the greateſt Temporal Riches, yet would they be no hindrance to his union with God. This is that *poor Man* of whom the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 7. *This poor Man cried, and the Lord heard him.* And if we could ſuppoſe ſuch an one to be at never ſo great a Diſtance from God, (even in the very nethermoſt Pit, and in the very Belly of Hell it ſelf,) yet would the moſt Merciful Father,

True Poverty of Spirit.

Is not hindred by external Riches.

ther, out of his abundant Mercy and Goodneſs, infallibly draw him to himſelf. For the Fulneſs of Divine Grace chooſeth to diſcover it ſelf in the Depth of Humane Miſery, and can no more forſake it, than a tender Father could leave his beloved and darling Son under the Agonies of a dangerous Sickneſs. Of this we have an inſtance in the *Canaanitiſh* Woman, who looking upon her ſelf as no better than a Dog, immediately obtained help of *Jeſus*, Matt. xv. 27. In a Word, no Man ever yet came to the Fountain of Living Truth, but by the Way of Humility, and Poverty of Spirit.

The condeſcending Favour of God towards Humane Infirmity.

§. 3. He that underſtandeth this, will never think Contempt, Reproaches, Poverty, or the Croſs, either bitter or irkſome to him. Yea, rather with the Holy Apoſtles, he rejoices and triumphs that God has thought him worthy to ſuffer Shame and Torment for his ſake. So that I think we may be aſſured, that the trueſt and ſafeſt Way of coming to an union with God, is that of *deep Humility, and true Poverty of Spirit*. This is typically expreſſed to us by *the Throne of Solomon*, which was aſcended by ſix Steps, and the ſeventh was the Seat and *Throne of Peace*, 1 King. x. 19. So likewiſe there are ſix Steps or Degrees of *Humility*, by which we are to aſcend to the Heavenly *Solomon*, the true King of Peace; that is, by which we may arrive at the Perfection of ſpiritual Joy and Peace. *The firſt Step* is, that a Man reckon himſelf, without the Grace of God, the meaneſt and vileſt of all Men, and have no deſires of Honour and Eſteem among Men. The *Second* is, To deſpiſe and judge no Man, but have a conſtant Eye upon himſelf; according to that Saying of the * Poet, *whatever others do, mind thou thy ſelf.* The *third* is: To refuſe and avoid the Honours that are offered; and

The Acknowledging our own Nothingneſs is the way to arrive at the living Truth.

Six Steps of Humility.

* Quicquid agant homines, ſis memor ipſe tui.

the

they cannot be avoided, to receive them with indifference, and even contempt. The *Fourth*, To bear Reproaches with Joy. The *Fifth*, To converſe willingly with Men of inferior Rank and Condition than our Selves, and be ſo far from thinking our Selves better than them, as rather to think our Selves the moſt miſerable and wretched of all Men, if left but never ſo little to our Selves. The *Sixth* is, Readily and cheerfully to ſubmit, not only to our Superiors, but even to the leaſt and meaneſt of the Servants of God, for *Chriſt*'s ſake. By theſe Steps we aſcend to the laſt and higheſt of all, where is the Seat of *Solomon*, the Throne of *Peace*. *The Way is low*, (ſaith St. *Auſtin*) *but the Country to which it leadeth, is on high. And there is no coming to the exalted Felicity of the Kingdom of God, but by the low Valley of Humility and Self-denial.*

CHAP. VI.

How the chief and eternal *Good* does often manifeſt it ſelf to the Soul in a Moment; what and where the Seat of God in the Soul is.

CANT. vi. 1.

Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou Faireſt among Women.

God is always preſent with us, though we do not attend to his Preſence

§. 1. THOUGH our Beloved is always with us, yet does He never diſcover himſelf but when the Heart is quiet and compoſed,

poſed, and all the Senſes recollected in God. When nothing earthly appears in the Underſtanding, but all its animal and worldly Wiſdom is ſwallowed up in the divine Darkneſs and Night of Faith; then the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſes, darting Light and Glory through the benighted Soul. This is that *Darkneſs* which is the Habitation of God, this is that (*a*) *Night*, in which the Will reſts ſweetly in Union with the Will of God; and in which the Memory forgetteth all the Impreſſions of the Creatures. Then in a Moment does the divine Light ſtrike the *Underſtanding*, heavenly Deſires inflame the *Will*, and eternal Joys poſſeſs and fill the *Memory*; yet can neither the Underſtanding, the Will, nor the Memory, comprehend or retain the tranſcendent Joys with which they are viſited of God. For this Perception is not lodged in the Faculties of the Soul, but lies hid in the very Ground and Centre of it. Yet it may ſometimes break forth in Words, ſo that we may cry out with St. *Auſtin*'s Mother *Monica*, *Let us fly, let us fly, to the eternal Joys!*

The Revelation of God in the Soul: and the Effect hereof.

§. 2. From this Fountain ſpring all the unutterable Sighs and Groans of Holy Souls. This was the ſweetneſs that St. *Paul* taſted when he broke forth into theſe Words, *Rom.* viii. 38. *I am perſuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God.* Meaning that love of God which he had experimentally taſted in his own Soul. Thus

(*a*) N. B. This *Night* of the Soul is by ſome of the Spiritual Writers called the *Cloud of Unknowing*; and there is a Treatiſe written in *Engliſh* on this Subject with this very Title; which is very ſcarce, but is approved and cited by ſeveral myſtical Writers.

Thus St. *Auſtin* witneſſeth of himſelf, *That he ſometimes felt ſuch exalted Joy in his Interiour, that if it were but laſting, he ſhould certainly conclude it could be nothing elſe but the Joys and Glories of the Kingdom of Heaven.* And this is that divine Pleaſure which longs to fill our Souls, and draw them to it ſelf. And by theſe foretaſts we know, what that Eternal Life is; that it is a State in which our Souls ſhall be fully ſatisfied with Heavenly Joy and Sweetneſs. Hence the devout Soul ſays, *Cant.* v. 8. *I am ſick with Love.* As if he ſhould ſay: *This is the Heighth of my Wiſhes, this is what I long for, and ſigh after: That I may find my Beloved, and be ſatisfied with his Love, and recover my antient Heavenly Nobility, which conſiſts in Union with Chriſt, that I may never more delight in any worldly or tranſitory Things, much leſs in my Sins, or ſinful Pleaſures.*

A Foretaſt of Eternal Life

How the Nobility of the Soul conſiſts in her union with God.

§. 3. This nobleneſs of the Soul, is but little known to the Men of this World, even thoſe that are accounted Wiſe and Learned. And they that have written Volumes about the Soul and its Faculties, have never come to the fundamental Point. For Chriſt is the true Strength of the Soul, its Underſtanding, Will, and Memory; that is, light in *its Underſtanding*; pleaſure in *its Will*; and joy in *its Memory*. So Chriſt is the true Sanctification, Glory, and Cloathing of the Soul; ſo that a Man, for the Love of Chriſt which he experiences in himſelf, cannot Sin. So we are told, 1 *Joh.* iii. 6, 9. *Whoſo abideth in him, ſinneth not. Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot Sin.*

This but little known.

The Life and Vigor of the Soul is Chriſt only.

§. 4. Yea, from this Love of Chriſt ariſeth often ſo great a Joy, as makes even Croſſes and Afflictions, not only tolerable, but even deſirable for Chriſt's ſake, *Acts* v. 41. So that their

The bleſſed Effect hereof

Croſs is turned into Joy, which is continually ſpringing up from its eternal Fountan in the Bottom and Centre of the Soul. For there God has ſanctified a Place for himſelf, and made it ſo peculiarly his own, that neither Angel, nor Man, nor any other Creature, can enter there. Here it is that God delights to dwell, and ſuffers no created Being to dwell with Him. God's chief delight is to dwell in a clean and pure Soul. So he tells us, *Prov.* viii. 31. *My Delight is with the Children of Men.* But what this Happineſs, how great this Delight is, no Man knows, but he that has experienced it; nor can he that has taſted it, explain it in Words.

What and where God's Seat is in us.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Dignity of the Soul. Of true Contrition; and of the Mercy and Compaſſion of God.

Iſa. lvi. 7. Matt. xxi. 13. Luk. xix. 46.

My Houſe is the Houſe of Prayer.

The high Dignity of the Soul, and wherein it conſiſts.

THE Dignity of the Soul conſiſts in this, that it is the Habitation and Temple of God, in which He takes more Delight, than in the whole Compaſs of Heaven and Earth. So the faithful Soul has more of the Divine Preſence, than Heaven it ſelf, than all the Temples made with Hands, yea, than all the Creatures in the World. God communicates his whole Treaſures of Love to ſuch a Soul, He rejoices and

and delights in her; yea, He created all other Beings only in order to make her happy and glorious. Wherefore, as God ſhews ſo much Love, and takes ſo much Pleaſure in the Soul of Man, He may more properly be ſaid to dwell in it, than in any material Buildings, yea, than in Heaven it ſelf. Here He diſplays all the Wonders of his Providence and Love; yea, and for this very End and Purpoſe has He created it with nobler Faculties and Powers than the reſt of the Creatures, that it might be capable of theſe exalted Communications of the Divine Grace. And if God ſhould beſtow upon the Soul any thing leſs than himſelf, ſhe would reject and deſpiſe it. Now St. *Paul* tells us, *Eph.* i. 4. *God has choſen us in Chriſt before the Foundations of the World.* Let this then be our Labour, this our higheſt Endeavour, to be really what we have been in the Divine Election from the beginning of the World. And as the Soul ought to be the *Spouſe* of the Son of God, it follows, that it is beloved by God above the Creatures. It was this Love that brought the Bleſſed *Jeſus* down from Heaven, to be united to the beloved Soul, which the Father had betrothed to him from all Eternity, and to bring her back to her great Original from which ſhe at firſt proceeded.

Where God may be properly ſaid to dwell.

The Soul is the Spouſe of God.

§. 2. Now as God has diſcovered this tranſcendent Love to the Soul, it naturally follows, that the Soul, ought to reſt in God alone, and not to proſtitute its Love to any Creature, at which ſhe knows God will be offended. So great is the Lovelineſs, ſo great is the Beauty that is in God, that if the Soul could take never ſo remote, never ſo obſcure a View of it, ſhe would not be ſeparated from Him to gain the whole World. The Soul then that is ſo beloved of God, ſhould be aſhamed to fix its Love

Our only Joy ought to be in God.

Love upon any Creature, which is affronting and injurious to God. She ought to be heartily ashamed and afflicted, if she has not preferred God before all Creatures, propos'd his Glory in all Things, and loved Him above all Things. This is the true *Contrition* which is acceptable to God. The whole Creation naturally love God more than themselves, and spend themselves in the Execution of his Commands. The Sinner only loves himself better than his God.

All Creatures naturally love God more than themselves.

What true Contrition *is*

§. 3. If thy Sorrow proceeds meerly from a Sense of thy own Loss, and not of thy Sins, and Offences against God, thy *Contrition* is not true, thy Sorrow is not acceptable before God: And though there were no Heaven to reward thee, nor Hell to punish thee, yet thou oughtest to be grieved, that thou hast offended and provoked thy God. For the Love of God is very Heaven, and his Anger that is Hell. But if thou hast in thy Heart that Contrition which I have described, and true Faith in *Christ*, thy Sins shall freely be forgiven thee. For it is more agreeable to Him to forgive Sins, than to punish them. Not to mention, that as He is our Father, and we his Children, He is obliged in Justice to shew Mercy to us. For if He be our Father, it follows, that He has a Fatherly Affection towards us, which will upon all Occasions rejoice and triumph against the Severity of his Justice.

The Consideration of God's Paternal *Affection to the Soul.*

§. 4. To this fatherly Affection of God, let us perfectly resign our selves. Whosoever rests in this, cannot but be well pleased, either with the Justice, or the Mercy of God. For he that truly loves God, will bear patiently all the Determinations of his Will, either towards himself, or the whole World; being on all Accounts conformed

to

to him, according to that Saying of one of the Antients: *I had rather be in Hell with God, than in Heaven without Him.*

CHAP. VIII.

That the Calling of God is ſincere, and mighty to draw the Soul to Himſelf.

PSAL. l. 4. 2 TIM. i. 9.

He ſhall call the Heaven from above, and the Earth, that He may judge his People. God hath called us with an holy Calling.

§. 1. GOD our Heavenly Father, by all the Methods and Arguments of Love, is continually calling, alluring, and drawing us to himſelf. For ſo great is his Love towards us, as if his own Eſſence and Happineſs were endangered by our wandring from Him. So that in a Word, all his Works of Creation, both in Heaven and Earth, all the Wonders of his Providence, tend to this one great End, *viz.* to recal and reduce fallen Man to his Original, that is, Himſelf. All his Words, and all his Actions, call to the Soul to return to the Love of God from which ſhe is fallen, by hearkening to the tempting Inſinuations of *Satan*.

The earneſt Love of God towards us.

That all the Operations of God tend to the Recovery of Men.

§. 2. God invites us to believe in his Son, and follow the Steps of his *Meekneſs* and *Patience*, and by this means, to be reunited to himſelf, our firſt, our chiefeſt Good. For as when God called to *Elias*, and the Fire paſſed by, and the ſtrong

That the Call *of God is in the ſtill Voice.*

ſtrong Wind that rent the Mountains; yet God was not in them, but came at laſt in the *ſtill ſmall Voice*, 1 King. xix. 11. So at this Day He deſcends and manifeſts himſelf in Humble, Quiet, and Peaceable Souls. *And as Ahaſuerus embraced Eſther when ſhe fainted for fear of his Majeſty*, Eſth. v. 2. So God comforteth and ſupporteth the Humble Man, who has a true Senſe of his own *Nothingneſs*, and truſteth not in his own Strength. And did not God ſupport him with the everlaſting Arm of his Omnipotence, he would ſink under the Apprehenſions of his own Unworthineſs. Such a Man is ſo humbled in his own Eyes, that with all his Pretenſions to Reaſon and Power, he would ſeem to ſink below the vileſt of all Creatures. But no ſooner does the mighty King of Heaven caſt a look upon ſuch a depending Soul, but ſhe is ſtrengthened and refreſhed with the divine Conſolation. This is the Conſequence of true Humility, when deeply rooted in the Soul; the lower the Soul ſinks in her own Eyes, ſo much the higher ſhe riſes in the Sight of God. For the Eyes of the moſt High do particularly regard the low Valley of Humility. But if to this alſo be added, external Contempt and Reproaches, that ſinks the Soul yet deeper into the State of Annihilation, and by conſequence brings her ſo much the nearer to God. This is the Soil moſt fit to produce that *Peace of Spirit which paſſeth all Underſtanding*, Phil. iv. 7. This is the Fruit of all Trials, Injuries, and Afflictions. By theſe God prepares and purifies thee for himſelf, that at the length thou mayeſt return to Him, and He to thee.

What manner of Preparation is required in the Soul to receive this Call

The End and Deſign of all Afflictions.

§. 3. And this is not to be obtained by fine Words, and airy Speculations, but by manifold Afflictions. For it is not Talking or Thinking of *Humility*, that makes a Man humble; but bear-

The Neceſſity of them for obtaining a right Diſpoſition of Soul.

bearing the Croſs with Patience; without that thou haſt only the *Appearance*, and not the *reality* of Virtue. Upon which account, the Man that treats thee with Reproach and Contempt, ought to be regarded as thy particular Friend and Benefactor. For theſe two Virtues, *Meekneſs* and *Patience*, are not to be gained but by various Conflicts, and ſevere Trials, which are grievous and terrible to Humane Nature. And how canſt thou exerciſe theſe Virtues, but in the Time of Suffering? *Meekneſs* regards the Ground and Bottom of the Soul, which is beſt tried in the Hour of Adverſity. And *Patience* reſpects the outward Man, who is *to go out with Chriſt, bearing his Reproach*, Heb. xiii. 13. By this means the Man is conformed to the moſt holy and innocent Life of *Chriſt*, and *Chriſt*, with all the Merits of his Death and Paſſion, lives and governs in him.

The inward Call of God by a Senſation of divine Love.

§. 4. There is alſo another, namely, an *inward* Calling of God. *When he kindles in the devout Soul, the Fire of his Love.* By that means he conveys himſelf to the Soul, for *he himſelf is Love.* For it is as impoſſible to poſſeſs God without a true Perception of his Love, as for a Man to live without a Soul. For that *Chriſt doth live in our Hearts by Faith*, (Eph. iii. 17.) is only to be diſcovered by Love ruling in us, 1 *Joh.* xiv. 16. And this divine Love cannot reſt in our Hearts, till they be emptied of the Love of the World, (1 *Joh.* ii. 15.) and entirely and abſolutely fixed upon God. So that it will be a very uſeful Exerciſe, for a Man often to try and examine his own Heart, and ſee what is uppermoſt in his Affections, God, or himſelf, or any other Creature: Whether he loves Life or Death: What it is that principally engages his Affections, and takes up his Thoughts. And if upon enquiry, thou findeſt thy Heart ſet

A Method to find what we Love beſt.

The Love of the Creature not to be admitted into the inmoſt Centre of the Soul.

ſet upon any thing but God, that thou haſt any Affection that does not ultimately centre and terminate in Him, depend upon it, God cannot enter into that Soul, though thou ſhed as many Tears as there are drops in the Ocean.

The great Abſurdity of ſuch a Procedure.

§. 5. Unhappy Mortals, what are ye doing? Why do ye ſuffer a deceitful World to impoſe upon you by the Love of the Creatures, and inſinuate into the Centre of your Souls, which God requires to be conſecrated to his own uſe? It was for this only End that we came into the World, that by Mortification of our own Wills, and Contempt of the World and the Creatures, we ſhould return to God, and be reconciled to Him; ſo that as the Body is to return to the Earth again, the Spirit ſhould alſo return to God that gave it. And if thou returneſt not in Time, thou art undone to all Eternity. For by that in which thou haſt placed thy Joy and thy Delight here, by that ſhalt thou be judged hereafter. Let then this Golden Rule be deeply fixed in thy Heart: *Whenſoever thy Heart is emptied of the World and the Creatures, it ſhall forthwith be filled with all the Fulneſs of God; yea, aſſure thy ſelf, that were it neceſſary to leave Heaven and Earth, He would certainly do it in order to deſcend and take Poſſeſſion of a Soul thus emptied of the World, and prepared to receive Him.* On the other hand: If thou be full of the World, God cannot enter. For ſo much the more Delight and Pleaſure any Man takes in the Creatures, ſo much the farther is he removed from God. And how lamentable, how deplorable a Caſe this is, I need not ſtand to explain. *This then is a fixt and certain Concluſion, that not through worldly Joys and Pleaſures, but through many Tribulations, we muſt enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

That true and living Faith, purges the Heart from the Creatures, from corrupt Desires and Impatience; and on the other hand, gives us Love and Patience under the Cross.

ACTS xv. 9.

God hath purified their Hearts by Faith.

§. 1. THE Property of true Faith, is *to cleanse the Heart*; but from what? Why, from the World, and all earthly, vain, and perishing Desires; in a Word, from all Things in which corrupt Nature pleases and delights it self, whether Riches, Honours, or Pleasures. For Faith fixes its Eye upon those things only that are invisible and eternal. And when all Impediments are removed, an union quickly follows, and there can be no union without a Similitude. For God is pure Act, and wheresoever He finds a Soul empty of the World, there He delights to operate, and manifest himself, as the Spring of Life and Comfort to the afflicted longing *Soul*. The usual Speech of Christ in the Gospel to the Sick whom He cured was, *Thy Faith hath made thee Whole*, Matt. ix. 22. xv. 28. His meaning was not, that this was the Effect of the meer Act of Faith; but that Faith had so cleansed, purified, and humbled the *Soul*, that it was now fit for the more exalted Manifestations of the divine Power and Presence. *Faith the Purifier of the Heart.* *The Power of Faith wherein it consists.*

§. 2.

Why Chriſt could do no Miracles at Nazareth.

§. 2. And when our bleſſed Lord could find no *Souls* ſo qualified in his own City of *Nazareth*, therefore He could do no mighty Works there, *Mark* vi. 5. Where the Creature is, God cannot enter; one hinders the other. No Man can more heartily deſire the Aſſiſtance of God, than He does to communicate it to a devout and well-diſpoſed *Soul*. For as God fills ſuch a *Soul* with his Light, Conſolation, and gracious Preſence; ſo the longing *Soul* riſes as naturally towards God, as the Fire burns, or the Birds fly.

The empty Soul mounts towards God.

God longs to operate in us:

§. 3. And when God has once taken Poſſeſſion of ſuch an Habitation, He quickly operates in it all the Wonders of his Grace, in which He rejoices as once He did in our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; becauſe in Him He accompliſhed his own Will, without any let or impediment. *For no Work or Action can pleaſe Him, which does not begin and end in Him.* And as God delights thus to operate in Man, ſo He continually waits to ſee when we are fit to receive Him, being more ready to give, than we are either to ask or to receive. Take heed therefore that thou neglect not the preſent Opportunity. When the Day of Grace is over, we ſhall all receive according to our Works, and according to the Principle of Love that ruled in our Hearts, whether it be good or bad, God or the Creature. And this is ſo certain, that ſhould all the Saints of God intercede with Tears of Blood for any one Man, it would be all loſt Labour. For that which has poſſeſſed thy Heart, and engroſſed thy Affections here, ſhall be thy Lot and Portion to Eternity.

This Life the Seaſon of Converſion to God, and Averſion from the Creature.

§. 4.

§. 4. And as true Faith doth purifie the Heart from worldly Love; ſo does it alſo *from inordinate Affections*, as Anger, and Impatience; planting Meekneſs and Patience in their ſtead. For God worketh nothing in the Souls of the Faithful, but that which is agreeable to his own Nature. Now what is He, but mere Love, very Patience, and Meekneſs it ſelf, as He has manifeſted himſelf in our bleſſed Lord? As then the Love of God overflows towards all Men, having Mercy upon all; ſo it produces the ſame Love in every Chriſtian *Soul*, a Love free and univerſal; making no difference either of Friend or Foe, but being equally united to God, and to the whole Race of Mankind. Moreover, this Love rejoices in all the good Things that God beſtows upon Man, and is pleaſed with that variety of Gifts which are beſtowed upon the ſeveral Members of Chriſt's Body; to each of which he pays a proper and proportionable reſpect. For as there is a mutual Agreement between the ſeveral Members of the natural Body, in which the more ignoble Parts, as the Hands and Feet, ſerve the more Noble, as the Head, the Eyes, and the Heart; ſo ought there to be the ſame Agreement between the Members of the myſtical Body of Chriſt.

The farther Purification of the Heart by Faith.

The Union of the Members in Chriſt's myſtical Body.

§. 5. Wherefore, if we chance to meet with any Member of Chriſt, who is more Worthy and Honourable than our ſelves, we ought proportionably to Love and Eſteem him more than our Selves. And the greater Portion of Divine Grace and Favour he has received from *Jeſus Chriſt*, our ſupreme Head, ſo much the greater Reſpect and Love we ought to pay Him. For this Good is common to all, as being derived from our univerſal Head *Chriſt*

How this ought to regulate our Conduct.

Every good thing to be loved in God, and for God.

Jesus. But we cannot enjoy it without Charity, which makes all our Neighbour's Blessings our own; and whatsoever we love in God, and for his sake, considered as an universal Good, is properly ours. And as by Charity, all our Neighbours Blessings are made our own, therefore how many, or how great Favours soever God bestows upon a good Man, they are no less mine than his, if I love them as the Gifts of God, and for his sake. Yea, if any Man receive the Blessings of God with Fear and Humility, not being exalted with Pride and Arrogance, and if I can behold them in him, and love them for God's sake, and as proceding from Him, they are as properly mine as his.

The Way to become Rich in God.

§. 6. This is the Way, by which we are *spiritually* rich in God, and are made partakers of all the Blessings of Heaven and Earth; yea, and of all the Happiness that is laid up in Store for the Children of God, by the Mediation of our Spiritual Head *Christ Jesus*. So deep, so close is this Union, I am actually and properly possessed of all the Blessings which our Head *Christ Jesus* has diffused through all his Members, whether Men, or Angels, in Heaven and Earth. And the Effect of this profound Charity is *Patience*, by which a Man readily and willingly takes up his Cross, as a Preparation for the more sublime Gifts of God. For this is certain, that no Cross comes without its Reward. This made one of the holy Men of Old cry out: *Hail bitter Cross, full of Grace and Glory.* And St. *Peter*, 1 Epist. ii. 19. *This is thank-worthy, if a Man for Conscience toward God endure Grief.*

Charity produceth Patience.

The Cross ends in Glory.

Joy in Afflictions.

§. 7. Not to mention, that they who out of Love to the Cross of Christ, willingly bear

bear their own, are thereby made partakers of an eminent Pleaſure and Peace of Mind. He then that labours under any Croſs, external or internal, and yet without complaining bears it patiently, for the Sake of his ſuffering Redeemer, may reſt aſſured, that his Sufferings ſhall End in Glory, and his Sorrow ſhall be turned into Joy. The divine Conſolations are ever at hand to the reſigned and patient Soul. Which Peace is that ineſtimable *Pearl*, which is the Riches of the inward Man, which no Man can explain or comprehend, but he that has it. In a word, this is that *Peace which paſſeth all Underſtanding*, Phil. iv. 7.

The Peace of a reſigned Soul.

CHAP. X.

How the Light of Nature muſt decay in us, that the Day-ſpring from on high may ſhine in us.

2 COR. iv. 6.

God that made the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, hath ſhone in our Hearts.

§. 1. WHoſoever would have a juſt Notion of the Light *of Nature*, and the Light *of Grace*, muſt nicely diſtinguiſh between the Faculties of the Soul, that is to ſay, *the Reaſon, the Will*, and *the Senſes*, and the pure *Eſſence* of the Soul. Of which more plainly Chap. XXI. Here I ſhall only obſerve, that *the Light of Nature* reſides in *the Reaſon, Will, and Senſes*. Theſe Faculties, whilſt they keep the Soul in Subjection to them, hinder the divine Light of

The Light of Nature diſtinguiſhed from the Light of Grace.

Grace from displaying it self in the pure Essence of the Soul. So that before this can rise, the other must set. For the Light of Grace surmounts all Sense and Reason; yea, is hindred by them. Thou seest then, how little the Natural Man can do in divine Things, even nothing at all.

The Light of Nature must set, that the light of Grace *may rise.*

§. 2. Now let us consider how the Light of Grace generally arises in the Soul. God has the *Word of Grace*, which He has commanded to be preached, and by which He operates, and this Word is *Life and Spirit*. And though God by his Power and Providence be every where present; yet his proper Habitation, in which He peculiarly operates, and kindles his divine Light, is the Soul of Man. So that the divine Light in the Soul, doth not proceed from the Senses, nor from Reason, or any natural Faculty; but meerly and entirely from the Operation of divine Grace in the *Soul*. And this is the eternal Fountain of Comfort, Peace, Truth, Wisdom, and Life, the chief and everlasting Happiness of the *Soul*. As for all other Things, which are externally apprehended by the sensitive and rational Faculties, they are but as so many *dead Seeds* labouring under the Curse of Barrenness, and never coming to Perfection.

How the Light of Grace *doth manifest it self.*

§. 3. So then the only Happiness of the Soul, is its union with God, and the Operation of his Grace. And this no Creature, that has not the Image of God, can partake of. For nothing but God's own Image is capable of his Light, his Grace, and his Wisdom. By this Light the Soul truly recovers its *spiritual Strength*; that is, Understanding, Wisdom, and Knowledge in the hidden Mysteries of God. Hereby also is produced in the Soul, such an high *Relish* of divine Love, so sweet and plea-

Nothing but God's Image capable of this Light.

sant,

ſant, that ſhe has as it were an Averſion and Loathing of every thing that is not divine. Hence ariſe holy Inclinations, and Deſires after Goodneſs, flowing from that inward ſpring in the Soul, without the Concurrence of the Creature. The Creatures indeed can excite in us Pleaſure, Admiration, and Joy; but all by external Images and Impreſſions. So that we ought carefully to diſtinguiſh between theſe different Motions. The *Light of Grace* affects the very Root and Centre of the Soul, beyond the Comprehenſion of Senſe or Reaſon. So then, the more thou art purified and emptied of the Creatures, ſo much the more frequently and plentifully ſhalt thou be refreſhed with the Viſitations of divine Light and Truth.

The Renovation of the divine Image in Man.

§. 4. And from this Light ariſes the Knowledge of TRUTH, from which, ſo ſoon as a Man turns himſelf, and is entangled in external Fantoms and Images, he then falls into *Error*. For the Region of Truth is not without the Soul, but within it. And from this Light, are darted ſometimes ſuch Flaſhes and Streams of Wiſdom, as ſhew a Man more in an inſtant, than all the Men in the World could teach him. Yea, the Perception of this Light but for a Moment, will give the attentive Soul more Joy, Comfort, and Happineſs, than all the Creatures in the World can afford it. And this is tranſacted in the inmoſt Receſſes of the Soul. This is the Fountain at which holy *David* drank, as he tells us, *Pſal.* cxix. 98, 99. *Thou, Lord, through thy Commandments, haſt made me wiſer than mine Enemies, for they are ever with me. I am wiſer than my Teachers, for thy Teſtimonies are my Study. I am wiſer than the Aged, becauſe I keep thy Commandments. I have refrained my Feet from every evil Way, that I may keep thy Word.* Thus *David*, who, through that whole

The Knowledge of Truth from a divine Light.

Pſalm, makes it his Prayer and Requeſt to God, that He would let the divine Light ſhine, and the divine WORD ſpeak, within him; that ſo, by the Fear of God, and diligent keeping his Commandments, he might preſerve this great internal Treaſure ſafe and ſound. Upon which account he ſays, *Pſal.* cxix. 72. that *the Law of his God was dearer unto him, than Thouſands of Gold and Silver.*

The Divine Light gives us a Contempt of the World.

§. 5. In ſhort, the *Soul* that is ſenſible of the Value and Sweetneſs of this inward and heavenly Treaſure, can have no reliſh or eſteem for the Pomps and Pleaſures of this World; but will ſay with *Solomon*, Eccl. i. 2. *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.* But as this Light cannot ſhine in a wicked *Soul*, (*For what Communication hath Light with Darkneſs?* 2 Cor. vi. 14) and yet is the greateſt Bleſſing of the Soul, therefore holy *David* prays ſo ardently, ſo devoutly, (yea, he falls into that copious Eloquence, that aſtoniſhes the Reader) that it would pleaſe God to protect him from the Darkneſs of Sin, and keep him in his Fear. *Laſtly*, ſo exceedingly plentiful is this Light, ſo wonderful is its Charity, that, like a Flaſh of Lightening, it often ſtrikes the Hearts of wicked Men, warning them of their approaching ruine, and as it were, ſnatching them from the Jaws of Deſtruction, which is undoubtedly the Fruit and Effect of this Illumination. And in this Senſe, *The Light ſhineth in Darkneſs, and the Darkneſs comprehendeth it not.*

The Darkneſs of Sin extinguiſhes the Light of Grace.

This Light hindered by the activity of our Senſes.

§. 6. Now this divine Light is hindred from diſplaying it ſelf in the Bottom of the *Soul*, by the reſtleſs Activity of the external Senſes. For as the Ear is perpetually longing to hear, the Eye always buſie in ſeeing, and the Heart conſtantly taken up with external Objects, this ſcatters and diſtracts the Powers of the *Soul*. Whereas on the

the contrary, the Light of Grace cannot ſhine but in the moſt ſettled and compoſed frame of Spirit. So that from this inward Principle of Light, the Senſes, the Reaſon, the Underſtanding, the Will, and the Memory, might be repleniſhed with Light and Wiſdom. For the enlightened *Soul* neither ſees, nor hears, nor ſpeaks as before. She ſpeaks no more the ſuperficial Language of the natural Man, but Words full of *Spirit* and *Life*. *Which are never at reſt.*

§. 7. Now alſo ſhe begins in *Spirit* to contemplate the Glory of God, ſighing after Him, and ſaying: *O God, who art moſt beautiful to my Eyes, moſt ſweet to my Mouth, moſt charming to my Ears, moſt lovely to my Heart!* The Works that ſuch a *Soul* doth, are no longer her own, but the Works of God; and ſo much more noble than her own, as God is more noble than the Creatures. Then alſo ſhe comes to underſtand, that Bleſſedneſs cannot be the Reward of her own Works, but the Gift and Grace of God. So likewiſe ſhe finds more Contentment when ſhe ſuffers God to act in her, than when ſhe works and labours her ſelf; for by this means ſhe has joy and comfort in all her Actions, as knowing that they are all wrought in God. *How the Soul muſt be Paſſive, to enter upon the* Contemplative Life.

CHAP. XI.

That God is the Light of the Soul; even a vital Light ſhining forth from within, through all the Virtues and Chriſtian Works towards our Neighbour.

1 JOH. i. 15.

God is Light, and in him is no Darkneſs at all.

God's chief delight is to enlighten Man.

§. 1. GOD is the moſt high, moſt pure, ſubtil, clear, and beautiful Light; flaming with an ardent deſire of enlightning the *Souls* of Men, and uniting himſelf to them, if not hindered by the Darkneſs which Men *love rather than Light*, Joh. i. 5. Chap. iii. 19. Now the Darkneſs of the *Soul*, is *the Love of it ſelf, and the Love of the World*, which obſtruct and hinder the Operations of God in us. Wherefore if the *Soul* would be partaker of this divine Light, let her take care not to be overcome by the Love of the Creatures, as Covetouſneſs, Anger, Self-love, Ambition, and the Luſt of the Fleſh. All theſe are *the Darkneſs* of this World, in which the God of this World ruleth, 2 *Cor.* iv. 4.

What the Darkneſs of Man is.

How a Soul ſeeking the Light of God muſt uſe the Creatures.

§. 2. So then, a Man muſt forſake himſelf, and all the Creatures, yea, every thing that is not God; this is called, *Luk.* xiv. 33. *The forſaking all that a Man hath.* Such a *Soul* is fixed entirely upon God, and is enlightened by his Truth; and if by the Will of Providence, he be forced ſometimes to engage in worldly Affairs, he does it with Humility and Fear, ſtill keeping

keeping the Centre of his *Soul* free from any Defilements of the Creature. So that the Emanations of divine Light are not obſtructed, but flow in perpetual *Streams* from their *Fountain*, which is God. *Laſtly*, This inward Light breaks out into the external Actions, ſo that now whatſoever a Man ſays, or does, or ſuffers, is no longer an act of his own, but of God, to whom he hath ſurrendred and dedicated himſelf; for how can he act who is meerly paſſive? So then whatſoever impreſſion or impulſe thou findeſt in thy ſelf, whether it be a devout Deſire, a good Intention, an inclination to Prayer, or Thankſgiving, all is from God, and not from thy ſelf. Submit thy ſelf therefore to the mighty Hand of God, and ſuffer Him to accompliſh his Will in thee; for ſo whatſoever thou doſt is in Him, and through Him, and He worketh in thee.

How the Good that is in us is from God.

§. 3. A neceſſary Condition of all good Works is, that they ultimately regard God, and be wrought in Him, *Joh.* iii. 21. So that we ſhould live in Him, pray in Him, and do every thing in Him. One ſuch work wrought in God, however trifling and inſignificant it may be in the Eye of the World, is of more Value in the ſight of God, than all the Actions wrought in the Humane *Strength* and *Spirit*. This is the *Spring* of true Virtue, the Eſſence of which is, that it begin and end in God. But as the Love of the World and the Creatures prevail more and more in thee, ſo much the farther art thou removed from God. But by how much the nearer God is to the ground of thy Heart, ſo much the more deeply and plentifully will he *ſhine forth*, and manifeſt himſelf by works of Charity and Compaſſion towards thy Neighbour. For our bleſſed Saviour tells us, *Joh.* viii. 12. *I am the Light of the World.* In Him therefore let

Good Works to be done in God.

That God may ſhine forth *in the Chriſtian by Charity.*

let us act. Let us cleave to the Love of this our Head, that we may be enlightened in *Christ*. For of all our Actions, those only may be called *Light*, which proceed from God, and diffuse themselves through the Darkness and Miseries of our Neighbours, in Patience, in Meekness, in Humility, in Consolation, in Compassion, in meek Reproofs, and charitable Censures. Whereas from an insolent Love of Censuring others, do arise Self esteem, High-mindedness, Contempt, and Insolence toward our Neighbours. This is the Root of innumerable *Sins*, yea, of the Devil himself, who sprang from a Seed of Pride.

How this Light teacheth us to behave ourselves towards our Neighbours.

§. 4. But as into such *Souls* the Light of the *Holy Spirit* cannot enter; so where He inhabits, these Vices have no place. The Man of God judgeth not his Neighbour, unless compelled by Necessity, and then too, he does it with great Gentleness, and in proper Time and Place, lest whilst he attempt to cure one Wound, he should make ten, by an unseasonable and improper Application. One thing ought carefully to be observed in Reproving our Neighbour, *viz.* that we should not publish such uncharitable Reflections upon him, as may any way injure his Reputation, either in his spiritual or temporal Concerns; but, on the contrary, every one should keep himself within the Bounds of Meekness and Charity, lest he endanger his own Humility or Poverty of Spirit; in short, we should all follow the Example, and endeavour to be more and more transformed into the Nature of the blessed Lamb of God, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again*, but prayed for those that took away his Life. But he that delights in uncharitable Censures, and railing Accusations, is the Seed of the old Serpent, their very Breath is infected with his hellish Poyson,

Poyſon, whilſt, like him, they delight in being *Accuſers of the Brethren.* Who even whilſt they know not themſelves, yet will dare to cenſure and judge their Neighbours.

§. 5. Conſider, O Man, this iniquity of thy perverſe Heart, and *judge thine own Heart*, but cenſure not thy Neighbour. The falſe Light of Nature miſleads thee, and draws thee blindly into Pride, Self-love, Arrogance, and raſh Cenſures of others. But, know thou, that this is not the Light of God, but the very Darkneſs of Hell. For the true and divine Light always diſcovers it ſelf in Modeſty and Humility. It hunts not after the empty Applauſe of Men, but ſeeks after its inward ground, which is God, from whom it proceded, and into which it longs and labours to return. Such a Man thinks himſelf the weakeſt, vileſt, and moſt ignorant of all Men, being fully perſuaded, that whatever Good there is in him, it is not his, but God's.

To diſtinguiſh the Works of the Light of Nature *from thoſe of the* Light of God.

§. 6. Above all Things therefore, endeavour to know thy ſelf, and trouble not thy ſelf about thy Neighbour, particularly, about his Faults; leſt in the Bitterneſs of thine Heart, thou be tempted to hate or deſpiſe him. Turn away then thine Eye, for God's ſake, from any malicious Vices of thy Neighbour, and turn them into thy ſelf, and conſider whether thou art not, or haſt not been as deep in the Mire as he. And if this appear to be the Caſe, conſider it in the Order of Providence, as an opportunity of Reading thy own Defects in the Life of thy Neighbour; and as a Means of bringing thee to the Knowledge of thy ſelf, to true Repentance and amendment of Life. Then turn thine Eyes upon thy Neighbour, and pray to God for him, that He would be pleaſed, of his Fatherly Compaſſion, to grant unto him alſo

Know thy ſelf.

How to conſider our Neighbour's Faults, and profit by them.

ſo the ſame Knowledge and Amendment of Life. The Soul that is thus diſpoſed, profits by his Neighbour's Miſcarriages, and is preſerved from the Sin of raſhly judging or condemning him.

CHAP. XII.

That every Chriſtian ought once a Day, at the very leaſt, wholly to withdraw himſelf from all external Objects, and retire into the inmoſt Ground of his own Soul: And the very great Advantages which he, from ſuch a Practice, ſhall reap.

PSAL. cxvi. 7.

Return again to thy Reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord hath rewarded thee.

The Soul can be united but with One.

§. 1. THE Soul of Man, flowing out into worldly Things, and cleaving entirely to the Creatures, is like a wandring Sheep, whom the great Shepherd of *Souls* tries, by all the Methods of his Mercy and Wiſdom, to bring back to the Fold, by emptying him of the Creatures, and filling him with all the Fulneſs of God. Thus the Royal Pſalmiſt concludes his beautiful cxix*th* Pſalm: *I have gone aſtray like a Sheep that is loſt, O ſeek thy Servant.* Which expreſſion, how odd ſoever it may ſound to carnal Ears, does however to the ſpiritual Man diſcover the whole Work of *Illumination* and divine Wiſdom. For as the *Soul* of Man

is

is placed between Time and Eternity, ſo ſoon as ever ſhe turns her ſelf to *Time*, ſhe forgets Eternity, and retires every Day further and further from divine Things. But if ſhe turns her ſelf *to Eternity*, then ſhe forgets the Creatures, recovers her liberty, draws nearer to God, and is throughly drawn unto Him. For there is nothing dearer to God, than a *Soul* abſtracted from the Creatures, and reſigned to Him. Then, and not till then, the *Soul* enjoys true Peace, taſts the Food of Life, and feels in her ſelf the true Fruits of that divine *Unction*, that ſpiritual *Chriſm*, which denominates us truly *Chriſtians*.

How the Soul may become intimate with God.

§. 2. And if theſe things are ſo, who can doubt, but that it is the Duty of every true Chriſtian, if not oftner, yet once a Day at leaſt, to taſt this divine Food of the Soul, which is God himſelf, that thereby he may be refreſhed with true Peace, and repleniſhed with the Fulneſs of divine Grace? Wouldeſt thou, O Man, but throughly conſider this, I doubt not but thou wouldeſt be much more in Love with Heaven, than with Earth! Wert thou but thus diſpoſed, though the Burden of a whole Kingdom lay upon thy Shoulders, as it did upon *David*'s, yet ſhould it be no hindrance to thy pious Exerciſes. For the Creatures are not in themſelves hurtful, but are only ſo to him whoſe *Soul* is in Captivity to them. Or as it is ſaid, *Pſal.* lxii. 10. *who ſetteth his Heart upon them*, which ought to be entirely conſecrated, dedicated, and devoted to God. Upon this Foundation ſtood the Royal Pſalmiſt, when he cried out, *Pſal.* lxxiii. 25. *Lord, whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth which I deſire in compariſon of thee.* For ſo great is the ſweetneſs of divine Love, that the Soul which has once taſted it, does immediately deſpiſe

The daily Exerciſe of Abſtraction from the Creatures indiſpenſable:

Yet the Creatures are not hurtful, if they do not poſſeſs the Heart.

spise Sufferings, and looks upon the Love or Hatred of this World with indifference and contempt. They that are admitted to those hidden Joys, have perpetual Peace in God with all the Creatures, whether Friends or Enemies. To these *the Yoak of Christ is sweet*, Matt. xi. 30. For they are in Christ, and Christ in them; and his Presence makes their burden Light, whilst he bears it in them, and they in him. This is what St. *Paul* says, Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*

The Advantages which accrue to the Soul from this Exercise.

§. 3. From what has been said, I think it appears plainly, how necessary, how profitable an Exercise it is for every Christian, *once a Day at least, to retire into his own Heart*, into God, and into Christ, *to draw thence true Peace of Soul, and to learn there the true Use of Temporal Blessings*. For God does not forbid us the Use of these, so that we walk in Humility, and in his Fear, and continue faithful in our Attendance upon Him. *Our Misery* requires this of us, which in such a *Soul* God will not suffer to last long; and so does, *Lastly*, *Our daily Cross*, which Christ by this means makes light and easie to us. Not to say, that thou, O Christian, art continually admonished by the Spirit of God within thee, to sigh and pray for the Love of God, and of God alone, and to grieve within thy self, when any worldly impediments draw and separate thee from it. This, this is the true and inward Calling of the Holy Ghost, this is the *Well-beloved's knocking at the Door of thy Heart*, Rev. iii. 20. for a living Testimony, that our *Heart* ought to be the *Bed-Chamber* of our Heavenly Bridegroom.

The internal Calling of God to this spiritual Retirement, and what thence may be learnt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

How the *Love of God* enters into the Soul when it is empty of the Love of the Creatures: And of the illuſtrious Operations and Effects of this Divine Love in Man.

§. 1. HE that deſires to become the Temple and Habitation of God, muſt firſt diveſt himſelf of *the Love of the World*, and then exerciſe himſelf in the *Love of God*. For no Man can receive the one, without quitting the other; or be filled with the Spirit of God, before he be evacuated by the Spirit of the World. Now as the Loadſtone by a touch draweth Iron to it; ſo God firſt touches with his Divine Love the Soul, which he intends to draw and unite to himſelf. *We cannot love God and the World together.*

§. 2. And this divine Love is ſo extenſive, that, like the Sun, it ſhines upon all, yea, it ſhines more univerſally than the Sun it ſelf, diſplaying it ſelf equally upon all Men. So that it is not the Fault of God, (who is *pure Light*, and *pure Love*,) but of Men, if they do not perceive or enjoy it. For when the Spirit of God approaches Men with the higheſt Love, and moſt ardent Affection, He generally finds their Hearts full of the Love of the World, and all Uncleanneſs, being crouded with Covetouſneſs, Pride, Luſt, Hatred, Envy, and evil Thoughts; which force him to retire and withdraw his Graces from them. For the Soul is indeed touched and drawn down by the Magnetiſm of Earth, or rather, of Hell. Whence it appears, that ſeeing God is ready, like the Sun *The Love of God is* univerſal, *How the Operations of it are hindred.*

Sun in the Firmament, to communicate the Rays of his Light freely to every purified Soul, it is not his fault, but theirs, if they are not enlightened by it. Seeing therefore we know these Things, let us keep our ſelves from the Love of the World, and turn to the living God, watching diligently unto Prayer. Let us labour earneſtly for the Love of God in Chriſt, by which we are united to Him. Let us knock at the Door of his holy Wounds, and from thence expect Salvation. And if we do this, no doubt God will open to us, and give us admiſſion into that high State of *unitive* Love, in which we ſhall be refreſhed with all the Treaſures of God. And who can doubt, but that the God of Mercy, the Fountain of Happineſs, will fill the Heart of Man with greater and more ſubſtantial Joys, than any which this periſhing, corrupt, and tranſitory World can afford us?

How they are to be promoted on our part.

§. 3. Whoſoever therefore loveth God, ſhall be loved by all the Saints and holy Angels. If I love God, I am thereby entitled to the Love of all the Inhabitants of the City of God, a Love that far ſurpaſſes the higheſt Degree of worldly Affection. And as all the Heavenly Hoſt have the higheſt Love for God, and rejoice more in his Honour, than in their own Happineſs, (if we could conſider them abſtracted from each other) ſo is their Joy proportionably great, at every Step of our Converſion, and their Happineſs enhanced by every advance we make in the Love of God. Now one Argument of divine Love is this, *that we uſe the Creatures with Fear and Humility*. For he that is endued with a Habit of divine Love, whether he eat or drink, or whatever he doth elſe, like a dutiful Son, doth every thing with Reverence and Fear, having his Eye conſtantly fix-

The Love of God accompanied with that of the holy Angels and bleſſed Saints.

How the Creatures are to be uſed by a Lover of God.

fixed upon the Glory of his Heavenly Father. From this Fear of God, flow the many deep Sighs and passionate Groans of the devout Soul, which by gentle Degrees, mount him from Earth to Heaven. For he discovers so many Corruptions and Impurities in himself, obstructing the Light, and quenching the Flames of the Holy Spirit, that he is forced to cry out with St. *Paul*, Rom. vii. 24. *Wretched Man, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death!* And, O when, and how shall I be *Redeemed from the Earth*, to follow my beloved *whithersoever he goeth.*

The Sighs and Aspirations of a divine Lover, how rewarded.

§. 4. And truly these Sighs and Groans must be frequently Mounting up to the Mercy-Seat of God, that, by the Assistance of divine Grace, we may bear up, and not faint under the manifold Miseries of this wretched State, and the Pressure of such a vile *earthly Body*. Thus did all the Holy Men of Old Time, when they laboured under the Sense of spiritual Infirmities: they raised their broken Spirits unto God by devout Sighs, penitential Tears, and humble Acknowledgments of their Misery, which returned back into their own Bosoms with a large encrease of Grace and spiritual Strength. He that doth not sincerely seek after God, but hath his Soul intent on something else besides Him, shall never find Him. On the other hand, he that seeks Him alone, in the Integrity of his Heart, shall surely find Him, and be admitted to all the Blessings and Happiness that are to be found in the Presence of God. He that seeks God in Truth, finds God, and all Things that are God's: And whosoever seeks for nothing else, and looks for nothing else but God only, unto him doth God manifest himself, and give and confer upon him all whatsoever is laid up

in his Divine Heart, that the ſame may as properly be ſaid to belong to *Man*, as to *GOD*.

CHAP. XIV.

The Chriſtian Soul, which is to be the Habitation of God, muſt be prepared by the Exerciſe of deep Patience, and muſt take diligent Care to preſerve the Love of God; what that Love is, and what the Effects of it are upon the Soul.

ISA. liii. 7.

He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter.

The Lovers of Chriſt muſt imitate his Lamb-like Meekneſs.

WHoſoever would rightly prepare his Soul for union with *Jeſus Chriſt*, muſt, like Him, be cloathed with the Meekneſs and Patience of the *Lamb*. Yea, he muſt have the very ſame Mind that was in *Chriſt*, and become a Lamb even as He was. Let this be thy Rule and thy Guide in all thy Actions. Thus He tells us himſelf, *Matt.* x. 16. *Behold, I ſend you forth as Sheep among Wolves.* This is truly thy Caſe which way ſoever thou turneſt thy ſelf, remember that thou art in the midſt of *Wolves*, to whoſe ſecret or open Violence thou art continually expoſed; and againſt this thou haſt no other Remedy but *Patience*, *Meekneſs*, and *Submiſſion*, according to the Example of the *Lamb of God* thy Saviour, *Jeſus Chriſt*.

§. 2.

§. 2. And as this Meekneſs of the bleſſed *Jeſus* was highly acceptable to his Heavenly Father, ſo alſo is thine, when by Patience thou doſt triumph over Perſecution. So that it is thy Buſineſs to ſubmit cheerfully to his Will, whenſoever he ſhall be pleaſed to lay his afflicting Hand upon thee, either more immediately from Heaven, or by any kind or ſort of Suffering which may fall upon thee by the means of any Creature. It muſt all be born with Patience, as coming from the Hand of God, and aſſure thy ſelf, that the faithful Shepherd is at hand, *to ſeek and ſave the loſt Sheep, and bring it home upon his Shoulders rejoicing*, Luk. xv. 5. Thus the patient Soul is by every impetuous Wave of Affliction wafted nearer to God. But if thy blind carnal Reaſon ſuggeſt to thee any excuſes or objections againſt thy Submiſſion; hearken not to them, but fix thine Eyes upon the exemplary Patience of thy Redeemer, look ſtedfaſtly to thy crucified Saviour, who did no Evil, yet ſuffered all Injuries without thoughts of Revenge. Endeavour to be more and more transformed into the Meekneſs of the Lamb, and above all Things, preſerve the *Love of God*, which cannot abide in a wrathful Soul.

How the Chriſtian Soul is to be prepared and ordered with Meekneſs and Patience.

§. 3. And here conſider well with thy ſelf, what that *Love* is; do not fancy it to be that inward Joy, that unſpeakable Pleaſure, which ſometimes raviſhes devout Souls; that is not the Eſſence of Love, but the Brightneſs and Flower of it, as different from its Root and Cauſe, as the Light is from the Fire, from whence it proceeds. But the true *Eſſence* of divine Love, is to be reſigned to the Will of God, to depend entirely upon Him, and to ſubmit to every Affliction, as coming immediately from his Hand. Thus did holy *Job*, who taking the Loſs of his Children, his Goods, his

Wherein the true Eſſence of the Love of God conſiſts.

What Effects are produced by it.

Health, and his Honour, as coming *from the Hand of God, ſtill bleſſed the Name of the Lord,* Job i. 21. So King *David* looked upon the Revilings of *Shimei*, as coming from God himſelf, (2 *Sam.* xvi. 10.) and laying aſide all thoughts of Revenge, continued immoveable in his Patience. For by this Means, the Eſſence, the Flame, the Root, and Spring of Love, are preſerved pure and unſhaken, and by Love we reſt in God, and rejoice in all his Diſpenſations. So that if it ſhould pleaſe God to ſink ſuch a Man to the loweſt Hell, he would not open his Mouth, but reſt ſatisfied with the Will of God, in which only he finds happineſs and reſt. In this Love true Peace is to be found, when in God, and for God's ſake, we love every thing, Croſſes and Tribulations not excepted. True Love unites us to God, and to all the World. And the Happineſs of ſuch a State is inexpreſſibly great.

True Peace conſiſts in Patience.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

That Chriſt, the Eternal Word of the Father, perfects his Work in the Heart of the Faithful by inward Inſpirations and ſpiritual Converſe. How this is tranſacted by the Means of Charity; and how He manifeſts and diſcovers himſelf in Humility.

2 COR. xiii. 5.

Prove your own ſelves, whether Jeſus Chriſt be in you.

The inward Conſolations of God.

§. 1. AS the faithful Soul is obliged to bear the Temptations and Suggeſtions of the evil Spirit: So, on the other hand, it feels the divine Conſolations, from the Mouth of the Eternal Word ſpeaking in it. Of this *Thauler* ſpeaks: *We muſt know*, (ſays he) *that the Eternal Word is ſo very near to the Ground and Centre of the Humane Soul, that his own Nature and Being are not more Eſſential and Familiar to him than that. This eternal Word is continually ſpeaking in Man, though his perverſe Heart, deluded and infatuated by the Devil, neither hearkens nor attends to it. This evil Spirit makes him deaf by his wicked Inſinuations, the Love of the World, and carnal Inclinations.*

God is nearer to us than we are to our ſelves.

Suggeſtions of Satan.

How theſe are caſt into the Soul, and how they are beſt oppoſed.

§. 2. The Devil to this Day tempts all Men, as he did *Eve*, (Gen. iii. 4.) by thoſe things which he knows to be moſt agreeable to our Tempers and Inclinations; by Riches, Honours, Friendſhips, our own Nature, the Love of the Creatures, and infinite other ways, by which

he influences and affects our Imaginations. For as he is induſtriouſly buſie about us for our Deſtruction, ſo he narrowly obſerves the particular Byaſs of our Affections, and knows all the ſecret Arts of raiſing our Paſſions; and when by thus ſtriking our Imaginations, he has ruffled and diſcompoſed our Spirits, we immediately become deaf to the loudeſt Calls of the Spirit of Wiſdom. Theſe Suggeſtions of Satan we muſt oppoſe with all our Might. For ſo far as we attend to them, ſo much the nearer are we to our ruine; but if thou ſtop thine Ears to his Inſinuations, and turn thy ſelf unto God in the Centre of thy Soul, thou haſt already conquered him. And as true Friends united in Affection, are particularly delighted in mutual Converſation and Diſcourſes; ſo if thou ſincerely love God, thou ſhalt frequently hear his Voice in thine interior. *If any Man love me,* (ſaith *Chriſt*, Joh. xiv. 23.) *he will keep my Sayings*: not only thoſe which he hears in the outward and viſible Temple, and Congregation of the Faithful; but thoſe alſo which are heard in the true Temple of the Soul, without which, the outward hearing availeth little. And this inward Voice of God thou canſt not hear, unleſs the *Love of God be in thee.*

The Opening of the ſpiritual Ear for Converſation with God.

God ſpeaks to us both inwardly and outwardly.

§. 3. *The moſt certain Token of the Love of God,* (ſaith St. *Gregory* the Great,) *is, that we receive all the Adverſities that God ſhall think fit to lay upon us, without any impatience in Thought, Word, or Actions: If we do this, without doubt we truly love God; if not, it is certain, that we love Him not ſincerely, but prefer our ſelves and our own things before Him: though nothing can be properly ſaid to be a Man's own but Sin, every thing elſe is Gods.* Take heed therefore that thou prefer not even the *Gifts* of God before *himſelf*, whom if thou love purely and above all

How to know whether the Love of God *be in us.*

all Things, then thou ſhalt ever and anon hear Him ſpeaking Peace to thy Soul, according to that Saying of our bleſſed Lord's, *He that loveth me, to him will I manifeſt my ſelf*, Joh. xiv. 21. And this manifeſtation is made by the Opening of the Underſtanding, the Illumination of the Heart, *by the Spirit of Knowledge, of Underſtanding, of Fortitude, and of Fear*, Iſa. xi. 2. and eſpecially by the Purifying *and Enlightning of the inward Eyes*, Eph. i. 18. to ſee and know *Jeſus Chriſt*.

The Gifts of God not to be preferr'd before God himſelf.

§. 4. And as the Devil uſes to ſtop the inward Ears of Men by his Suggeſtions; ſo he alſo blinds their Eyes by Self-love, by the Love of the World and the Creatures, and by inward and outward Pride. For as by true and genuine Love, we hear *Chriſt*; ſo by Faith and profound Humility, we muſt ſee Him; for that only can purifie our Hearts from vain Pride. So that it is not without reaſon, that our bleſſed Lord tells us, *Matt.* v. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart: for they ſhall ſee God.* And for this Cauſe it is, that God ſends us ſo many Croſſes and Afflictions, that we may thereby be brought into the Depths of profound Humility, an exerciſe more profitable to us, than all the Delights and Glories of this World. And now though Heaven, and Earth, and Hell it ſelf, ſhould unite their Forces againſt thee, yet bear up with Conſtancy and Patience, remembring that all ſhall work together for thy good; as it ſerves to produce in thee true Humility, by which thou ſhalt ſee *Chriſt*. Look at Him, O Man, and conſider thou, how He that is God, moſt High and Omnipotent, by whom were made the Heavens and Earth, and who could eaſily again have reduced all things into nothing; yet for the ſake of his wretched Creature Man, did ſubmit himſelf to the moſt bitter

How Converſe with God may be obtained by Humility.

How Croſſes produce Humility.

How the Sufferings of Chriſt do it.

bitter and barbarous Sufferings. Be thou then, that art but a mortal Man, hereat ashamed : O sinful and wretched Creature, be thou ashamed of that Pride, Vain-glory, and Self-love, that have taken such possession of thy Heart.

Conformity to the suffering Life of Christ.

§. 5. But learn to submit thy self to every Cross that shall be laid upon thee, of what sort soever it be, whether inward or outward ; and so subject thy proud swelling Spirit to the thorny Crown of *Christ*, that thou mayest imitate thy humble and crucified Lord, by a true Contempt of thy self, making this the great End and Design of all thy Actions, to be conformed to the meek and suffering Life of the blessed *Jesus*, that so thou mayest come to an experimental Knowledge of Him. For what signifies a few cold formal Considerations upon the Sufferings of our Lord, whilst we are destitute of that meek and patient Spirit with which he bore them? To entertain our Fansies with a few dead Speculations about his Passion, whilst our Hearts are full of Pride, Ambition, and worldly Love? This surely is not the Way to the true Vision, and experimental Knowledge of *Jesus Christ*. For as the Heavenly Bodies exert their influences upon the very Bowels of the Earth ; so the Spirit of *Jesus* operates most deeply in the profound Valley of Humility. And in this consists the Essence of *Humility*, that a Man look upon himself and all that he ever has, or ever can do, as Nothing. For if there be any good in thee, it is not of thy self, it is the Gift of God.

No other Way but this, to the true Vision and Knowledge of Christ.

§. 6. And this Humility thou must practise, if ever thou expect to see *Christ*. *For the hidden Mysteries and Wisdom of God are revealed to the Meek and Humble ; but are hidden from the wise Men of this World*, Psal. li. 8. Matt. xi. 29. 1 Cor. i. 20. For in this Humility only consists

Divine Mysteries revealed to the Humble

ſiſts the Knowledge and Underſtanding of pure and divine Truth, in which the Eſſence of eternal Bleſſedneſs doth conſiſt. In this the greatneſs of the divine Majeſty manifeſts it ſelf, which the more clearly we diſcern, ſo much the deeper Root doth Humility take in our Souls. And the moſt certain Sign of divine Illumination is, that a Man grows daily more and more humble, and is leſs fond of himſelf. For Self-love and Pride are the Fountains of all the Darkneſs, Error, and Iniquity that are in us. On the other Hand, they that are truly enlightened by God, glory in Contempt and Sufferings, and rejoice to imitate their ſuffering Redeemer. This is the ground Work and Spirit of that excellent cxix *Pſalm*. The Royal Prophet knew, that without ſuffering the Shame, there was no coming at the refreſhing Preſence, and comfortable Converſation of the bleſſed *Jeſus*.

The Majeſty of God diſcovers the Vileneſs of Man.

§. 7. In a Word, this humble and reſigned State of Soul, is that in which God particularly delights to operate. And he that has this, carries in his Soul the comfortable Preſence, and in his Body the ſuffering Marks of the Lord *Jeſus*; and conſidering himſelf as unworthy of the leaſt of God's Mercies, he uſes them all with reverence and fear, having his Eye, like a good Servant, obſervant of his Maſter's beck, and therefore worthy to be honoured with his more immediate Confidence and Converſation.

The Soul full of God, whilſt the Body is full of Suffering.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

How the Holy Spirit is received, and operates in our Souls.

ISA. xliv. 3.

I will pour Water upon him that is Thirſty, and Flouds upon the dry Ground.

How the holy Spirit is poured out upon a thirſty Soul.

§. 1. IF after a Drought and Dearth of *Three* Years and an Half, (ſuch as happened in the Time of *Elias*, 1 King. xvii. 1. xviii. 45.) it ſhould pleaſe God to ſend Rain upon all the Earth, one Man's Field only excepted; he would certainly have reaſon to think God was angry with him, and that his particular Caſe was moſt deplorably miſerable: But how much more miſerable and unhappy is he, who though hungring and thirſting like a parched Ground, after Faith, Charity, and all Chriſtian Graces, yet could not receive one drop of ſpiritual Conſolation in the inward Ground of his Soul? But if this ever happens, it is not God's Fault, for *He is ready to pour out his Spirit upon all Fleſh*, Joel ii. 28. but Man's, who prepareth not his Heart to receive it.

The Preparation of the Heart to receive the holy Spirit.

§. 2. The beſt *Preparation* to receive this holy Gueſt, is to turn our Hearts by Faith and Prayer from the World unto God, as the Apoſtles did at *Pentecoſt*, Acts ii. 4. and whenſoever God ſhall find us thus prepared, he will forthwith viſit us with all the Fulneſs of ſpiritual Bleſſings. On the other Hand, if the Heart be full of the World, there will be no room for the Spirit of God to enter; for where the

the one is, the other cannot be. As in Nature there is no emptineſs, and every capacity is filled one way or other, ſo it is in the ſpiritual World. Let this then be thy care, let this be thy chief Concern, not to fix thy Heart upon any Creature, either inwardly or outwardly, not on the Love of thy ſelf, nor upon thine own Will, but upon God alone; aſſuring thy ſelf, that this is the moſt noble and uſeful exerciſe for thee.

The Heart is to be fixed on God alone.

§. 3. For as the fineſt Work of the moſt exquiſite Work-man may be broken and deſtroyed by a giddy heedleſs Child; ſo it often fares with the Works and Gifts of God, which Men deſtroy by their raſh and unadviſed Management. For thus they break and deface the moſt noble Deſigns and Operations of the Spirit of God within them; they attribute that to themſelves which is the Work of God, and patch their own vile Raggs upon the fine Linnen of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs. For it is moſt certain that *we are unprofitable Servants*, Luk. xvii. 10. and by conſequence can do nothing but what is unprofitable. And by how much more noble God is than Man, ſo much more noble and precious are the Works of the Divine, than of the Humane Spirit. Hence it follows, that if thou wouldeſt have God to operate more eminently in thee, thou muſt ſurrender all the Paſſions, Affections, and Powers of thy Soul, to be poſſeſſed, governed, and directed by Him. For unleſs the Creature be entirely ſtill, thou canſt not hear the Voice of God. Think not then that every inward Motion which thou perceiveſt, is the Work of God; whereas ſome are meerly the Productions of Fleſh and Blood. Take heed therefore to thy ſelf, and learn to diſtinguiſh well, leſt thou ſometimes aſcribe to God the very Operations of the Devil.

The great Danger in fixing the Heart upon ſpiritual Gifts

§. 4.

Two Rules to be obſerved in Preparing the Soul to receive the Spirit.

§. 4. But in order to the more perfect Operations of the Holy Ghoſt, there are two Rules proper to be obſerved. *Firſt*, That thou turn away thy Heart from the World, from the Creatures, thy Self, and thine own Will and Affections, that ſo this Holy Spirit may have room to act freely. *Secondly*, To receive all Croſſes and Afflictions as coming immediately from the Hand of God, without any reſpect or regard to the Creatures, and to embrace them as Preparations for receiving more plentiful Communications of divine Grace and Bleſſing. Suppoſe, for inſtance, thou wert engaged in ſome *good Work*, or act of *Devotion*, and ſome intimate Friend ſhould break in upon thee with abuſive and reproachful Language; if thou couldeſt bear this with Silence and Patience, thou mighteſt be aſſured that even that was the Work of God, in order to prepare thee for greater Bleſſings. And if wicked thoughts be ſuggeſted to thee, by the Inſinuations of the Devil, yet ſatisfie thy ſelf, that they do thee no harm, becauſe they are involuntary. *Laſtly*, If thou art engaged in any worldly Calling or Profeſſion, ſee that thou perform thy Duty in it with thine Eye fixed upon the Glory of God, and the *Good* of thy Neighbour. By this means all thy Works ſhall be wrought in GOD.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

How it may appear that the Holy Spirit is in us.

JOH. xvi. 8.

The Comforter [or, Paraclete] *ſhall reprove the World.*

§. 1. WHEN the Holy Spirit enters into our Soul; *i. e.* manifeſts his Preſence by his Operations, He forthwith reproves in us every thing that is not Divine; giving us a ſort of Loathing and Abhorrence of them. Whoſoever therefore lives a carnal Life, without the inward Correction and Admonition of the Holy Spirit, may aſſure himſelf that that Spirit is not in him; inaſmuch as it is peculiarly his Office and Character, at all Times, to perſuade, draw, and invite every one that will but give him Room and Opportunity freely to act, to the Duties of Chriſtian Piety and Holineſs. This is what St. *John* calls, *Reproving the World of Sin.* For every thing is *Sin*, that oppoſes our Obedience to the Will of God. And every ſuch act of *Diſobedience*, or inclination to it, the Holy Spirit *reproves* wherever it enters; hence ariſe ſpiritual Sadneſs, Grief, and inward Terrors of Mind. Of this the Children of this World have little Experience, tho' it be a certain Sign of the Preſence of the Holy Spirit in the Soul.

The Operation of the Holy Spirit in the Soul.

The firſt Token to judge of this by.

All Sin is Diſobedience.

§. 2. But they that are utter ſtrangers to this godly and holy Sorrow, who run on with delight and ſatisfaction in the Way of the World,

A ſecond Token of the Preſence of God's Spirit in us.

World, upon whom all things ſmile, and who find here their Hearts deſire in every thing, and never meet with any Croſs; theſe Men, I ſay, are in a very dangerous State, and being deſtitute of God's Spirit, are certainly without God in the World. On the contrary, they that are afflicted of God, and are reproved in their Conſciences by the Spirit of God for every Act of Diſobedience to his Will; they that are chaſtiſed with the Rod of his Children, and are led in the Way of the Croſs, being brought under the Diſcipline and Correction of Wiſdom; are they with whom the Spirit of God prepareth himſelf an Habitation. And this is the *ſecond* Sign of the divine Preſence in us.

A third Token of his Preſence.

§. 3. The *third* Sign is, that it takes away from us all the Glory of our own Merit and Righteouſneſs, ſo that before the Righteouſneſs of God it falls as a Flower of the Field, and *withers as Graſs, when the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it*, Iſa. xl. 6. For the Spirit of *Chriſt* ſhows us that we have no other ſolid and ſtable Foundation to reſt upon, but the Merits and Righteouſneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Wo to our own Righteouſneſs*, (ſaith St. *Auſtin*) *if it were to be tried and judged without the Mercy of God.* For this reaſon *Iſaiah* compares it to *filthy Rags*, or the Impurities of a menſtrous Woman. Chap. lxiv. 6.

A fourth Token of it.

§. 4 A *fourth* Token of the Preſence of God's Spirit, is when a Man looks upon his Neighbour's Faults with *Compaſſion*, not rudely cenſuring or condemning him. For that inſolent itch of Judging others, is diabolical, proceeding from nothing but Pride, Contempt of our Neighbour, and Admiration of our Selves. And where theſe reign, the Holy Spirit cannot abide; but whereſoever He is, there a Man is careful,

How we are to reprove the Faults of our Neighbours.

(1.) Not to reprove his Neighbour, but upon urgent

urgent neceſſity. (2.) To do it in proper Time and Place, after the Advice and Example of our bleſſed Lord. (3.) Not to do it in rough and ſevere Terms, but with Meekneſs and Humanity. (4.) Not to deſpiſe his Neighbour, nor expoſe him to the Scorn and Contempt of others, but to do all from a pure Principle of Charity. Let theſe things ſink deeply into thy Heart, that thou mayeſt abide in Humility, and in the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and that He may operate in thee.

CHAP. XVIII.

That worldly Pleaſures drive away the Holy Spirit; by which the Soul is robbed of its chief and only reſt.

1 PET. ii. 11.

Abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which War againſt the Soul.

§. 1. THE Children of this World follow earneſtly the Joys and Pleaſures of it, which the Children of God flee from with all their Might, as from ſo many Snares and Temptations of the Devil, deſigned to draw them from God, their chief and only Good. And if thou, O Chriſtian, reſolve to preſerve this moſt valuable Treaſure, be careful to avoid all Occaſions of loſing it. Of this ſort, are all the little Impertinences, falſly called Sports, Paſtimes, and Recreations, whether they conſiſt in Words or Actions; in a Word, all thoſe Actions *Worldly Pleaſures.*

Actions which do not ſome way or other tend to the Glory of God, and the Good of our Neighbour. And though thou art ſometimes forced to be preſent at them, yet then let me adviſe thee to turn thy Thoughts inward, by elevation of thy Heart to God; and ſo thou ſhalt never loſe the Comfort and Peace of the Divine Preſence whereſoever thou art. And whilſt thou art faithful to this Exerciſe, the World and all its Vanities ſhall not hurt thee.

A Caution about worldly Converſation.

§. 2. This was Queen *Eſther*'s Caſe, who, though outwardly cloathed with Royal Ornaments, yet was inwardly cloathed with profound Humility. Thus *David*, in the midſt of his Glory and Riches, had nevertheleſs mean and humble thoughts of himſelf, 2 *Sam.* vi. 22. And *Joſeph*, in his Maſter's Houſe, though abounding with Plenty and Luxury, yet preſerved his Chaſtity, *Gen.* xxxix. 9. And this is that true Fear of God that keepeth his faithful Servants from the World and all its Vanities, that they loſe not their inward Joy and Peace of Conſcience. *This Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom*, Pſal. iii. 10. Eccluſ. i. 16. And he that is endued with this, will not turn himſelf to the World, but from the World to God, ſeeking his Contentment, his Joy, and Peace in Him. This, in ſhort, is the Fruit of true Contrition; to turn us away from all Things which are not God, or do not tend to Him; and to turn us to that Chief and true Good, which is, and is called God: And if we are conſcious to our Selves that we have hitherto neglected this uſeful Exerciſe, and have been immerſed in the Vanities of the World, let the Remainder of our Lives be ſpent in bewailing and lamenting our paſt Tranſgreſſions, and in forſaking and obſerving every approach towards them; if we do this, God will not remember

In the midſt of this not to loſe the divine Preſence.

The Fear of God preſerves us from the Vanities of the World.

member how great Sinners we have been, but will rejoice at our Repentance, not regarding our former Iniquities, but our preſent Faith, and earneſt Deſires of Serving God more faithfully for the future, than hitherto we have done.

God regards our Faith and Sincerity.

§. 3. But, though God ſo earneſtly deſires our Salvation, yet too many, by turning from Him to the World, reſiſt his Grace, and force Him out of their Hearts, in ſpight of all his gracious Endeavours to continue there. So then, as it is neceſſary that every Man ſhould die to the World, that would live unto God, it is plain, that the greateſt Part of Mankind are at enmity with God. *Alas! how many Mortifications muſt we undergo, before our corrupt Nature, both externally and internally, be perfectly ſlain in us, and the Life of God ſucceed in its place.* Now this *Mortification, or Death to the World*, is accompliſhed by various Croſſes and Trials, internal and external; which are as ſo many Remedies applied to our Corruption, in order to drive out of us the Poyſon of Sin, and reſtore us to the Life of God. From whence it appears, that the Benefit of Afflictions is very great, and that we ought to embrace them with Contentment and Joy, as the Means of purifying our corrupt Nature, and bringing us to a Participation with the Divine Nature.

That many reſiſt the Grace of God.

That by Dying to the World, the Soul obtains its chief Reſt.

§. 4. This is that which brings us to the nobleſt Exerciſe of Chriſtian Duty, *viz. Dying to the World*, in Proſperity and Adverſity, in Silence and Hope, ſecretly and inwardly, without the leaſt Murmur or Complaint. For they who fret and repine, clamour or complain, diſcover plainly, that they are unwilling to die to the World, and that they are ſtrangers to the Divine Light. For God cannot live in that Soul which is not dead to

The nobleſt Exerciſe of a Chriſtian.

Impatience under the Croſs, ſhews that Men have no mind to die to the World.

the World. The more we live after the Luſts of corrupt Nature, ſo much the leſs we live unto God, and his Holy Will. On the other hand, the leſs we live unto the Fleſh, ſo much the more we live unto God. Let this then be our certain Rule, that he muſt die to the Fleſh that would live to the Spirit.

CHAP. XIX.

Of *inward Prayer*, and of the true Uſe of the *Lord's-Prayer*.

ROM. viii. 15.

We have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Prayer the Work of the Holy Spirit.

§. 1. AS God operates eminently in humble Souls; ſo does the Holy Spirit particularly work in them the Gift of *filial Prayer*. For without the Spirit of God there is no true Prayer; for He it is that cries and groans in our Souls, being as it were its Tongue and its Life, *Rom.* viii. 26. *Gal.* iv. 6. For as our Soul is the Life of our Body, ſo is the Spirit of God the Life of our Soul, being the Source and Spring of all its ſpiritual Life, Vigor, and Strength. This Holy Spirit is alſo the Witneſs of our Adoption and Regeneration, which whoſoever knows how to uſe as he ought, relying, by Faith in *Chriſt*, and Love of the Holy *Spirit*, upon the eternal Love of his Heavenly *Father*, ſuch a Man may obtain all the good Things that he can ask for. For ſo great is the Love, ſo abundant is the Goodneſs of God, that

The Holy Spirit the Life of the Soul.

that He can deny nothing to his Children, who ask with Faith and Prayer. But as even this Faith, and this Gift of Prayer, are the Work and Gift of God, ſo muſt we alſo daily apply our ſelves to Him for the ſame.

Of inward Prayer.

§. 2. Hence ariſes the true *internal* Prayer of the Heart, from a true Converſion and Inclination of our *Souls*, and Affections towards God. This *mental* Prayer pierces the Heavens, whilſt a Man walking in the true Steps of his Saviour, freely and cheerfully takes up his Croſs and follows Him, not like *Simon the Cyrenian*, who *bore the Croſs indeed*, but it was becauſe he could not help it, *Matt.* xxvii. 32. So great is the Love of God, that He does not ſtay for our Prayers; but comes forth freely to meet us, and courts our Friendſhip, entreating us to ask Pardon for our Sins, and to practiſe the ſame Love towards our Neighbours which He ſhews towards us. Bleſſed and Happy is he, who truly knows, underſtands, and practiſes this boundleſs Love of God in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

The Efficacy of ſuch Prayer.

Such a Man prays more effectually *in Spirit*, than if he uſed the moſt perfect Form of Words. One ſingle Meditation, or devout Sigh offered up to God, by the Wounds of *Jeſus Chriſt*, in Faith, Charity, and Devotion, is more acceptable to God, than all the Pomp and Parade of external Worſhip.

The holy Exerciſe of Charity.

§. 3. The whole Life of a Chriſtian ought to be ſpent in the Exerciſe of *Charity*, and *Imitation* of his crucified Lord. For he properly is a Chriſtian, who does all things from a Principle of divine Charity, and is by it transformed into the Nature of *Chriſt*.

And following of Chriſt.

And can God deny any thing to ſo dutiful, and loving, and obedient a Child when he prayeth? No ſurely. But that we might know what we ought to ask, therefore hath *Chriſt* taught us the *Lord's-Prayer*,

a Prayer full of ſublime Senſe, and Petitions for the moſt exalted Bleſſings. Can there be a greater Good than *the Kingdom of God*? For He himſelf is his own Kingdom, comprehending in it all rational Creatures. So that when we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*: we pray that God would pleaſe to beſtow Himſelf upon us, with all the Riches and Bleſſings of his Preſence. In this Kingdom therefore, God is our Father, diſplaying and manifeſting his paternal Love and Faithfulneſs to his dear Children, by erecting his Kingdom or Temple in us, that therein He may perfect his moſt noble Work in us, expreſſed in this Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name*; which is done when the Dignity and Excellency of the divine Name and Nature are more deeply diſcovered in his Soul.

The right Manner of uſing the Lord's Prayer.

§. 4. In this Kingdom, which is within us, he works his own Will, without any impediment. And ſo his *Will is done in Earth*, i. e. in us, *as it is in Heaven*, i. e. in God himſelf. Whereby we may underſtand, that what God deſires to beſtow, and has commanded us to pray for, is nothing leſs than himſelf. This was the Promiſe that He made to *Abraham*, Gen. xv. 1. *I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward.* Moreover, our Heavenly Father gives *us our daily Bread*; i. e. He appropriates all his Creatures to our Uſe and Service, teſtifying thereby the greatneſs of his Love towards us. For the Heart that is truly conſecrated and devoted to God, and in which He freely executes his own Will, is capable of receiving the Fulneſs of his Graces and Bleſſings. So great is the Goodneſs, the Love, and Mercy of God, that He can deny us nothing that is fit or convenient, either for Body or Soul, and He beſt knows our Neceſſities. And for this end He is daily ſetting our Sins and Miſeries before our

The Kingdom *and* Will *of God in the Soul.*

The Bread *of Body and Soul.*

Eyes,

Eyes, teaching us to humble and abaſe our ſelves before Him, and to pray; *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* For ſo compaſſionate is God, that He freely offers us forgiveneſs of Sins, and teaches us how to ask it heartily; that thereby we may be aſſured, that He is more ready to forgive, than we are to ask it; and that we may learn from thence, to exerciſe the ſame Compaſſion towards our Neighbour, that He exerciſes towards us. For they that are truly the Sons of God, exclude no Man from their Charity, or from the Love of God. They have nothing more at Heart, than the Glory of God, the Encreaſe of his Kingdom, and the Salvation of all Men. Remiſſion of Sins.

§. 5. By this acknowledgment of Sin, and Petition for Pardon, the Chriſtian is taught, that in his natural State he is without God, and his Kingdom void of Comfort, poor, and miſerable. And therefore he is taught to pray, *Lead us not into Temptation*; by which the Devil endeavours to draw us from the Will and Kingdom of God; but that He would *deliver us from evil*, i. e. *from our own evil Will*, and corrupt Nature, which hinder the Accompliſhment of God's Will, and the Erecting of his Kingdom in us, and deprives Him of the Honour due unto his Name. *For his is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.* And whilſt we receive them as coming from Him alone, they ſtill continue to be His. But if we do not aſcribe them to Him alone, we exclude our ſelves from his Kingdom, his Power, and his Glory, not worthily ſanctifying his Name, nor obeying his Will. And hence it follows, that we alſo are out of the Verge of his Kingdom, and ſo have no Title to remiſſion of Sins, and deliverance from Evil. *Power againſt* Temptation. *Deliverance from* Evil. *All Glory to God alone.*

CHAP. XX.

That *Humility* muſt firſt be laid for a Foundation in the Ground of the Heart, and then all our Works muſt be ſuperſtructed on it. And how without this to build upon, all that a Man can build in his whole Life, will fall to the Ground.

Moreover it is ſhewn, how by this we may overcome the Devil; how in this conſiſteth true Repentance; how by this, we are enabled to bear the Croſs of CHRIST; and how by it to preſerve our Souls in Peace and Tranquillity.

1 PET. v. 5.

Be cloathed with Humility.

Humility is the Foundation of all our good Works.

§. 1. IF thou wouldeſt build for Eternity, let thy Foundation be Humility; for no Man of himſelf can do any thing. Wherefore in all thine Undertakings, humble thy ſelf before God, the overflowing Fountain of Grace and Mercy, and pray devoutly for his direction and aſſiſtance, that all thy Labours may be entirely directed to the Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory of God; and remember this, that whatſoever thou doſt without the divine Grace, can tend to nothing but Sin and Deſtruction. He that carefully attends to this, ſubmitting himſelf entirely to the divine Will, ſilently and humbly deploring his own weakneſs and vileneſs, and by ardent Love, devoting himſelf

Every thing that we do without the Grace of God is ſinful:

ſelf to God, he ſhall feel and experience in all the Powers of his Soul, the wonderful Works of God.

§. 2. On the contrary, *Pride* is that Vice which makes all our Works and Deſigns vile, filthy and abominable in the Sight of God. And alas! Why is Earth and Aſhes Proud? If we look into our Original, we were created out of NOTHING, of our Selves we are NOTHING, more fleeting than a vain Shadow: So corrupt, that nothing but the Grace of God reſtrains us from falling into the groſſeſt Sins, and ſinking into the loweſt Pit of Deſtruction. We are perpetually expoſed to the Aſſaults of the Devil, againſt whom we have no ſecurity but in *Humility*. For this evil Spirit, puffed up with Helliſh Pride, has all imaginable Advantages over the proud Man; but flies from the Meek and Humble. *Pride is the Root of the Diabolical Nature*; but ſo long as thou canſt preſerve thy Humility, turning thy ſelf to God from all thine Iniquities, ſo long he can have no power over thee.

Pride pollutes our beſt Performances.

The Root of the Diabolical Nature.

§. 3. How lamentable a thing is it then, to ſee a Chriſtian compleatly armed with the powerful Word and Spirit of God, ſo tamely and cowardly give himſelf up to the Devil. Such an one is like a cowardly Soldier, who though compleatly armed from Head to Foot, yet ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be ſtung to Death by a Fly or a Waſp. So powerful is the Grace of God in humble Souls, that if they will be true to themſelves, the Devil can have no power over them. And if thou ſuffer thy Self to be thus ſhamefully foiled, in ſpight of all thy ſupernatural Strength and Aſſiſtance; what canſt thou expect at the laſt Day, but the Inſults and Mockeries of thoſe very evil Spirits to whom thou haſt given ſo cheap a Victory.

Without deep Humility no overcoming the Devil.

There is moreover in humble Souls, a perpetual hungring and thirſting after the Grace of God, which God never fails to reward by the fulneſs of his Bleſſings; i. e. of himſelf. For He alone can ſatisfie the Cravings of an hungry and thirſty Soul. And this Humility is the Foundation of true Contrition and Repentance; for when a Man ſees the vaſt Impurity, the ſecret Malice, the innumerable Corruptions of his ſinful Heart, and bewails them with a ſincere Sorrow, he then greedily lays hold on the free Grace of *Chriſt* by Faith, and entirely reſigns and devotes himſelf to the Will of God. Such a Man's Sins God freely pardons, and as it were blots them out at once. For when a Man turns himſelf from his Sins unto God, God immediately turns unto him, and remembers his Tranſgreſſions no more.

Humility is the Spring of Contrition.

§. 4. Another Property of Humility is, that it cheerfully receives every Croſs ſent from God, as a Preparation for greater Gifts; it regards not the immediate Inſtruments by which he is afflicted, but looks up unto God from whom his Afflictions come. He rejoices in the Croſs, and ſalutes it, ſaying: *Hail bleſſed Croſs, unexpected indeed, and unlooked for, but not unwelcome. I know that it is the Will of God, by thee to ſanctifie and conſecrate me to himſelf.*

How we are enabled by it to bear the Croſs.

§. 5. Laſtly, Another Property of Humility, is to keep a Man *in Peace and quiet of Mind*, as well in Adverſity as Proſperity, as well in the Want, as in the Abundance of the Gifts and Bleſſings of God. So that the truly humble Man is always eaſie, whether it pleaſes God to give or to take away, and nothing can happen to him, to exalt, or deject him above Meaſure. In him the Wonders of divine Grace manifeſt themſelves. And as before he lived and

And to preſerve our Souls in Peace.

and acted by his own Strength, ſo he is now ſupported by God, and in and through Him produceth Fruit abundantly.

CHAP. XXI.

That a Man ought to reſt in God alone, and not in his Gifts. Of Self-Denial.

PSAL. xxxii. 11.

Rejoice in the Lord ye Righteous, and be glad all ye that are true of Heart.

§. 1. THE genuine and ſincere Love of God, propoſeth God alone for its end. It delighteth not in the Creatures, but in that Supreme, Eternal, and Uncreated Good from whence they proceeded, and this not only outwardly, but even in the very Fund and Bottom of the Soul. For the Soul, beſides its natural Powers and Faculties, by which it giveth Life and Motion to the Body, has an abſtracted, deep, pure, and central Eſſence, having no relation to the Creature; this is the Seat and City of God, abſtracted from all external and earthly Things: Here the Holy Spirit pours out his Gifts, dilating them through all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, in the different Manifeſtations of Wiſdom, Underſtanding, Languages, and Sciences.

The diſtinguiſhing Mark of our Love to God.

The Fund of the Soul, the Seat of God.

§. 2. And when corrupt Nature begins to delight and pleaſe it ſelf inordinately with theſe

The great Danger of being too much pleased with divine Gifts.

these Visitations, loving the Gifts more than the Giver, she immediately pollutes and defiles them by corrupt Mixtures of Self-love. And all that Love and Joy which results from thence, is blind, vicious, and deceitful. For as the Gifts of God are not God himself, so we must not place the same Love upon both.

And of Resting in them.

§. 3. But most Men rest in the Gifts of God, and upon the least Perception of divine Light in the Understanding, or warmth in the Affections, fancy themselves at the Top of Perfection; not considering that they are yet far short of it. Man was made for greater things, even to be a partaker of the Divine Nature; and God is certainly displeased if we stop short of it. There is nothing He so much desires, as to bestow himself upon us, and that after the most exalted and generous Way; and the least certainly that we can do in return, is thankfully to accept this generous Love, and to delight in God alone.

Whence the pure Love of God is so much obstructed.

§. 4. But so corrupt is humane Nature, and so addicted to Self-love, that it catches greedily at every thing that may please and gratifie its prepostrous Passions, placing its joy and happiness upon those delights, which, like *Jonah*'s *Gourd*, perish in the Enjoyment. This satisfaction, though in the Gifts of God, does pollute and defile them, and hinder his Operations in us. So great, and so deep, is the Corruption of our Nature introduced by original Sin, that scarce one in a Thousand can know his secret Faults, *Psal.* xix. 13.

The Source of inordinate Love, where to be sought.

§. 5. Hence proceeds that inordinate Love which Men have for themselves more than for God, the holy Angels, or all the Creatures. This abyss of Corruption, the most Learned Men could never yet fathom nor explain: And yet much more difficult is it to destroy and root

root it out of Humane Nature. This is that *denying of our Selves*, required by our bleſſed Lord, *if we will be his Diſciples*, Matt. xvi. 24. And certainly it is much eaſier to forſake all earthly Things, Gold, Silver, Houſes, and Eſtates, than to forſake *one's ſelf*. So deeply is this Poyſon rooted in our Nature! But as this *Self-denial* is abſolutely neceſſary, ſo God diſpoſes and prepares us for it by various Tribulations. This is the only *End* of all the Croſſes and Afflictions, inward or outward, ghoſtly or bodily, with which He is pleaſed to viſit us; namely, to bring us to the Practice of *Self-denial*.

And how to be cured:

The neceſſity of perfect Self-denial.

CHAP. XXII.

What makes our Works acceptable to God. How we may find Grace, and be juſtified before Him! How apt we are to abuſe the Gifts of God; and the proper Uſe we ought to make of them.

PSAL. xxxvii. 4.

Delight in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee thy Hearts deſire.

§. 1. AS Man in his natural State is obnoxious to the Wrath of God, it follows, that all his natural Works, how great and good ſoever they may appear in the Eye of the World, are ſubject to the ſame Wrath. For without the Grace of God we can do nothing that

No Work good without the Grace of God.

that is acceptable in his Sight; but if a Man be in a *State of Grace*, then all his Works are *grateful* and acceptable to God; becauſe it is the *Grace of God* which worketh them in him.

How this alone makes our Works accepted.

§. 2. Whence it appears, that all manner of Gifts whatſoever, (as St. *Paul* aſſures us) are to be aſcribed to the *Grace of God*, not to our ſelves, 1 *Cor.* xv. 10. and that by our own Works therefore, we can never be juſtified or ſaved. For though a Man ſhould ſuffer all the Pains of Martyrdom; though he ſhould perform all the good Actions that were ever done by all the Saints from the beginning of the World, or that ever ſhall be done by any; though he ſhould feed upon nought but Stones and Thorns, and ſuffered Death, not once, but every Day; yet could he not hereby of himſelf, be able to procure the leaſt Grace. Depend not then upon thine own Works, but upon the infinite Mercies of God in *Jeſus Chriſt*, with a reſigned and humble Spirit. And then be confident, that the ſame *Jeſus* will, of his free Love and Mercy, give thee whatever He ſhall ſee expedient for thee. This is the Meaning of that Oracle of our Lord, *Luk.* xvii. 10. *When ye have done all, ſay we are unprofitable Servants.*

Humane Righteouſneſs, how to be conſidered without it.

§. 3. O merciful God! how poor, how wretched, how worthleſs in thy Sight is our Righteouſneſs, it is no better *than filthy Rags*, as the Prophet expreſſes it, *Iſa.* lxiv. 6. For all the Works of *good* Men that have ever been wrought from the beginning of the World, or ſhall be to the end of it, would be of no value for our Juſtification. Enter then into thy purchaſed Inheritance by the ſafe Gate, even the meritorious Wounds of thy bleſſed Saviour. Offer up to God his Paſſion, for the Puniſhments which thou haſt deſerved; his holy Thoughts, for thy polluted Imaginations; his many di-

The ſafe Gate for the Soul to enter at.

vine

vine Words, for thy vain Speeches; in a word, all his Works, his Poverty, his Patience, his Meekneſs and Charity, for all thy Defects and Omiſſions. Keep thine Eyes fixed on the bleſſed *Jeſus*, and thou ſhalt obtain Grace and Favour with God. With the prodigal Son, return to thy offended Father, and He will receive and embrace thee. His Mercies are unchangeably the ſame, ready to be communicated to every ſincere Penitent. This He freely offers to all, and nothing is more agreeable and eaſie to Him, than to ſhow Mercy to him that asks it in Faith. *For his Hand is not ſhortened, that he cannot ſave*, Iſa. lix. 1.

§. 4. The more wretched and miſerable thou appeareſt in his ſight, ſo much the more welcome ſhalt thou be to Him, who is deſirous to enrich thee out of his own Treaſures. And the Sins of the whole World, bear no more *proportion* to his infinite Mercies, than a ſingle Drop of Water to the vaſt Ocean. But ſo ſoon as ever thou art in a State of Grace, all thy Works wrought thence in thee, ſhall be made acceptable to God, through his only begotten *Son*, by whom alone we have acceſs to his Mercies. In this Faith, in this *Union* with the Son of God, thou ſhalt live. He is that living *Fountain* that purifieth all our Uncleanneſs, and maketh all our Works acceptable in his Sight. But ſtill take heed to thy Self, and remember that thou reſt not even in thy ſpiritual Gifts and Privileges, which, as a Child of Grace, are beſtowed upon thee, but in God alone, the Author and Giver of them. Hence we are commanded, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 4. *To delight in the Lord*; not in his Gifts, but in his Glory; that his Will may be perfected in thee, and in all Creatures.

The Poorer a Man is in himſelf, ſo much the Richer he is to God.

§. 5.

No Reſting in the Gifts of God.

§. 5. As Rivers return back to their Fountain-Heads; ſo muſt we in like manner refer all our Gifts and Graces to their munificent Donour, which is GOD. In order to which, let this Rule be deeply fixed in our Minds. *If thou hadſt all the Gifts and Graces which God has beſtowed, either in Heaven, or on Earth, with the good Works of all the Saints that have been ſince the Foundation of the World; ſo ſoon as ever thou beginneſt to take an inordinate Pleaſure in them, and delight in them as a Property of thine own, they are immediately polluted and defiled with the Stain and Guilt of Idolatry.* For there is nothing either in Heaven or Earth, in which we ought to reſt, but God alone. And when we are come to this pitch of Perfection, then God himſelf is our Joy, our Delight, our Reſt, our Fulneſs, our Treaſure, our Riches, and our Refuge both within and without, and in this conſiſts the Perfection and Fulneſs of Bleſſing; we then become proper Veſſels and Inſtruments of divine Grace. For in proud Spirits, which are the Organs and Inſtruments of the Devil, God cannot operate; *but he giveth Grace to the Humble*, as St. *Peter* tells us, 1 Epiſt. v. 5. and filleth their Souls with his *hid Treaſures*. Inward Pride is the fruitful *Root* of all Vices. By this the Devil keepeth his ſtrong holds in the *Soul*, where God alone has a right to inhabit.

The Guilt and Folly hereof.

Proud Men are the Organs of the Devil.

God's Grace moſt illuſtrious under a mean and weak Appearance.

§. 6. The Vine, as to its outward form, ſeems to thoſe that know it not, to be but a vile and uſeleſs Plant, fit for nothing but the Fire; and yet under that mean outſide, conceals generous Veins and Springs of moſt noble Juice; ſuch are all thoſe divine Perſons, through whom the Spirit of God operates, they appear in the ſight of Men as vile, mean, and contemptible Perſons; their appearance is humble, void of ex-

external Pomp and Grandeur; but within, they are full of invaluable Treaſure, even living Streams of Bleſſing flowing inceſſantly from the Throne and Preſence of God. But they that are puffed up with their Gifts, that make a ſhow of their Alms, that build Altars and Windows in Churches at their own Coſt, adorning them with their own Names, Arms, and Titles of Honour; theſe, by diſplaying ſo induſtriouſly their *good* Deeds to the World, *have indeed received their Reward.* In the ſame unhappy State alſo are they, whoſe Mouths are very full of their own Wants and Unworthineſs, continually deſiring others to pray for them; not knowing that Alms, proceeding from an humble, ſincere, and devout Heart, are a more effectual Prayer to God, than all the verbal Interceſſions of Perſons hired to pray for them by their oſtentatious Benefaction.

All our works are to be wrought in Humility.

§. 7. If then thou wouldeſt have thy Works be ſincere, and acceptable before God, obſerve carefully theſe *Four* general Rules: (1.) *Think humbly* of all thine Actions, not reſpecting thy Self, but God alone. (2.) Let this Humility be deeply *rooted* and grounded in thy Soul, *humbling thy ſelf not only under the Hand of God, but every Man, whether ſmall or great*, out of an hearty Senſe of thine own Unworthineſs. (3.) Look upon all that thou doſt *as vile and worthleſs*, much leſs value thy Self upon any Performances. (4.) Have a profound Dread of the ſecret Judgments of God, not as proceeding from any doubtful or ſcrupulous Notions about the Mercies of God; but regarding Him as thy beſt Friend, be careful to avoid every thing that may be likely to diſoblige or offend Him. He that deſpiſes theſe *Four* Rules, renders even his beſt Actions impure and unclean in the ſight of God. But he that carefully attends

Four Rules to be obſerved, that we may find Grace with God.

tends to them as the Rules of Action, ſhall be like a green Olive-Tree in the Houſe of his God, bearing Fruit abundantly to everlaſting Life.

Whatever is uſeful to our Neighbour, is well-pleaſing to God.

§. 8. And here we muſt obſerve: That even the moſt inconſiderable thing that thou doſt, if it ſerve the *good* of thy Neighbour, is acceptable to God; whilſt he that employeth not his Talent to that end, ſhall have a dreadful Account to give at the laſt Day. This is the only Uſe and End of God's Gifts, that we ſhould readily and induſtriouſly employ them for the *Good* and Benefit of others. Every Action, every Art, Employment, and Profeſſion, were given by God for this only end. And theſe are the Works which our Lord tells us, *are wrought in God*, Joh. iii. 21. that is, in Faith and Charity, directed ſolely *to the Glory of God*, and the *Benefit of our Neighbour*, without any proſpect of Honour or Advantage to our Selves, of which every Man's own Conſcience is the proper Judge. Conſider then carefully with thy ſelf the Ground and Springs of all thy Actions, remembring that if thou neglect or refuſe to employ the Bleſſings of God for thy Neighbour's Uſe and Benefit, thou muſt have the ſame Puniſhment with *the ſlothful Servant*, who was deprived of his Talent which he had hid in the Ground, and not employed, and ſaw it given to another that knew better how to uſe it, *Matt.* xxv. 26. No leſs *fooliſh* are they, who pretend to things above their Strength, who talk eloquently and fluently of Things which they neither practiſe nor underſtand; though theſe confidently pretend to ſpeak in the ſame, and by the Authority of the bleſſed Trinity, yet is all this nothing but empty boaſting, unleſs they demonſtrate,

How to make the right Uſe of God's Gifts.

that

that they experimentally knew, what they ſo magiſterially talk of.

§. 9. Remember alſo, that all thy Actions, how great and glorious ſoever, which proceed only from Oſtentation and Vain-glory, can never be well-pleaſing to God. For ſuch as is the Principle of our Actions, ſuch are alſo the Actions proceeding from it. Whence it follows, that ſuch as regard themſelves only, are no better than Impoſtors and Hypocrites. Their beſt Works are no better than painted Sepulchres, which appear beautiful without, but within are full of nothing but Rottenneſs and Corruption. There is in them no pure Love of GOD, no deſire to promote his Glory; but a certain carnal Self-love, and inſatiable Thirſt of Vain-glory. The Sum of all is this, that all our Works, how ſpecious ſoever they may appear, if they be directed to any other End but GOD, are nothing but Vanity and Idolatry. For he is truly an Idolater, who propoſes any other *end* or *aim* but GOD. Wherefore, if thou haſt any Gifts, uſe them, but take heed that thy Heart reſt not in them; if thou doſt, thou art guilty of Idolatry.

The Principle of Action always to be attended to.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the Myſtery of the Croſs, and how we are thereby drawn unto God.

MATT. x. 38.

He that taketh not up his Croſs, and followeth me, is not worthy of me.

Every true Chriſtian muſt bear his Croſs.

§. 1. LET all that deſire to be the true Diſciples, Lovers, and Followers of *Jeſus Chriſt*, bear their Croſs in this World, be it what it will. If thou flee from one, another will meet thee; and do what thou wilt, thou muſt bear it. But under every Croſs, the Hand of God is with us to lighten it, and make it eaſie to us, and by his aſſiſtance, we may bear it with Pleaſure. But when God withdraws his Hand, then indeed it is truly an heavy Burden to Fleſh and Blood. Now the Son of God bore a very heavy Burden, and in the moſt afflicting Circumſtances; of which, in their Proportion, all his true Friends and Followers have been partakers.

God helps us to bear our Croſs.

The Advantages of the Croſs.

§. 2. Words cannot expreſs the many and great Advantages that are in *the Croſs*; foraſmuch as God lays it upon us in meer Love, that he may thereby draw us to himſelf, and make us *conformable to the Image of his Son*, Rom. viii. 29. and partakers of eternal Happineſs. The true Method of Patience, muſt be drawn from the *Five Wounds* of our bleſſed Saviour, which afford us proper Inſtructions for bearing our Croſs aright. The Wounds in his *ſacred Feet*, ſhould teach us *Abſtinence*, and *Patience*. *Abſti-*

Chriſt's Wounds are our Book to read in.

nence

nence from carnal Luſts, and fleſhly Pleaſures; and *Patience* under all Afflictions and Oppoſitions, whether from within or without. And theſe two Leſſons may be learnt from the Wounds in his Feet. The Wounds in his *ſacred Hands*, ſhould teach us Silence and Contempt of Worldly Things. The Wound in *his Side*, ſhould teach us to deny our Selves, and ſeek for reſt and joy in Chriſt alone. *Laſtly, His naked Body* expanded on the Croſs, ſhould continually put us in Mind, that we muſt be ſtripped naked and bare of all created Comforts.

The Soul muſt be ſtripped naked in Conformity to Chriſt.

§. 3. For as Chriſt was fixt naked to the Croſs, and *his Garments parted by Lot* before his bleſſed Eyes, *Pſal.* xxii. 19. So conſider and be aſſured, that if thou art deſirous of Perfection, thou muſt be ſtripped of every thing which is not God, and all thy boaſted Accompliſhments and Perfections be, as it were, the Sport and Jeſt of thy Neighbours. And as every Croſs, how ſmall ſoever, is laid upon thee by a particular order and direction of Providence, ſo thou oughteſt to receive it with gratitude and thankfulneſs. For the deareſt Friends of God, have always the greateſt Share of Afflictions. The Devil always makes uſe of our Proſperity, as the propereſt Seaſon and Occaſion of our Ruine; to prevent which, it pleaſes God, in meer Pity and Compaſſion, to viſit his beloved Children with variety of Croſſes and Afflictions, thereby withdrawing us from the Love of the World, and diſappointing the malicious Deſigns of the Tempter. Did we but know how efficacious the Croſs is to bring us to God, to drive away the Devil from us, and entitle us to future Glories, we ſhould not only expect it with Patience, but run out vigorouſly to meet it. *In a Word, ſo great*

The Devil ruines us by Proſperity: God reſtores us by the Croſs.

is the Dignity, ſo tranſcendent are the Benefits of the Croſs, that God has allotted it as the inſeparable Companion of all his choſen Servants.

The Honour of being conformed to Chriſt in his Suffering.

§. 4. Did we throughly conſider the Benefits of the Croſs, I verily believe we ſhould think our ſelves unworthy of ſo great a Bleſſing. Great is the Honour of being made like unto the *Son of God*! He was never acceptable to the World, but was their ſcorn and deriſion. But now a-days, ſcarce one Chriſtian in a Thouſand is come to that pitch of Perfection, as not to deſire to pleaſe the World. But he that pleaſeth the World, cannot pleaſe God. And he that is full of the World, is empty of God.

Die to thy ſelf, *and to the* World.

But ſo far as a Man dies to *himſelf* and the *World*, ſo far is Chriſt the true Life advanced in him. No Man can pleaſe God better than by a punctual fulfilling his Will. If my Prince ſhould like to ſee me in an Aſh-coloured Suit of Cloaths rather than any other, I ſhould certainly like it better than the moſt gaudy Dreſs. And ſince my God is better pleaſed to ſee me under the Croſs, I ought certainly to prefer it before all the Affluence and Glories of the World.

The Difference between Croſſes of our own, and of God's making.

§. 5. But perhaps thou art in doubt with thy ſelf, whether the Croſs which thou ſuffereſt comes from God; if ſo, let this be the Teſt. Whatſoever thou ſuffereſt *for thine own ſake* will be grievous and tedious, but if thou ſuffer *for God's ſake*, thy Croſs will be eaſie, and thy Burden light, for God himſelf will lighten it. What matters it then whether thy Load be an Hundred, or a Thouſand Pound Weight, if He but lend a helping Hand, *and make thy Yoak eaſie, and thy Burden light*, Matt. xi. 30. Wherefore, *good Lord*, lay upon me what Burden thou pleaſeſt, only aſſiſt me in my Weakneſs with the everlaſting Arms of thy Omnipotence!

tence! Next of all obſerve, *That the choiceſt Bleſſings of God are beſtowed upon us whilſt we are under the Croſs; and though they are ſometimes beſtowed before hand, yet it is the Croſs that confirms and roots them in the Soul*; and being ſo very uſeful and neceſſary to the *Soul*, God has given the largeſt Share of it to his faithful Friends and Servants, and particularly, to his *only begotten Son Jeſus Chriſt*; the Advantage it brings with it, making it tolerable and eaſie to be born. Devout and religious Men, ſubmit themſelves entirely to God, keeping their Minds eaſie and cheerful under all the Viciſſitudes of Life. Particularly they take care to preſerve their Humility, as the beſt Guard and Fence againſt the Aſſaults of their ſpiritual Adverſaries.

§. 6. Now it is very ſtrange, that though *God ſent his only Son into the World*, not to enjoy the Pleaſures and Profits of it, but to be a Pattern and Example of Sufferings; yet we ſhould expect an exemption from Sufferings. Alas, poor Mortals! be not deceived; if ye would walk in the ſafe Way, and reſt upon a firm Foundation, you muſt expect to ſuffer with Chriſt, and in ſome degree at leaſt, to have your Lives conformable to His. Every Affliction, how ſmall ſoever, is a Token of divine Love, decreed and commiſſioned to viſit us for our *Good*. And the united Malice of Earth and Hell cannot do the leaſt hurt to a devout Soul trained up in Sufferings, and obedient to the Diſcipline of the Croſs. The more his Enemies aſſault him, the higher is he exalted by God. And though he ſhould be thruſt down into Hell, yet there ſhould he meet his God, and Hell it ſelf ſhould be an Heaven to him.

The Ridiculouſneſs of expecting an exemption from the Croſs.

The Croſs and Temptations chaſe the Soul to God.

§. 7. As Huntſmen chaſing a Deer in a Park, whence they know he cannot eſcape, ſuffer him, when he is tired, to take Breath again, that he may be able to bear another Chaſe: So when God ſees a Man too weak for a Temptation, He refreſhes him a little with his Conſolations, that he may not entirely ſink under it. But let him know, that theſe intermiſſions are only allowed him to recover his Strength, that he may the better bear up againſt a freſh Aſſault. Thus it pleaſes the divine Love to exerciſe his Servants, that by various Trials and Temptations, they may be brought to deſpiſe and contemn all worldly Enjoyments, and, like the panting Hart, may long for the Fountains of divine Peace and Joy, the refreſhing Streams of Life and Glory. There the weary Soul may drink and be ſatisfied, and quench its Thirſt in thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure which are everflowing from the tender and paternal Love of God. This is what the wiſe Men of this World neither know nor underſtand. For the natural Man cannot diſcern the things of the Spirit of God.

The Uſe of divine Conſolations under them.

That God chaſtiſes us as a Father his Children.

§. 8. If the Children of the Family ſhould plunder the Cellar, and get drunk whilſt the good Father is faſt aſleep in his Bed, how do we think he would bear it when he comes to be informed of the Matter? Would he not correct their extravagance by wholſome Severities, and make them do Penance for their unſeaſonable Jollity? Thus God deals with his Children, He allows them plentiful Draughts of ſpiritual Comfort, and refreſhes them with his Mercies, as with new Wine; but when he ſees them begin to be immoderately fond of it, He withdraws it from them, and corrects their extravagant Joy, by mixtures of Gall and Wormwood, bringing them thereby to a Senſe of their

their Fault, and of their neceſſary Dependance upon Him. They now begin to think meanly of themſelves, and to bewail their vain Preſumption, which made them fancy they could do and ſuffer any thing for God's ſake, whereas now they are ready to ſink under a very ſmall Burden.

That hereby we bear the Image of his Son.

§. 9. We know that Chriſt led the Way for us in Miſery, Poverty, and Contempt, even unto Death; and without doubt we muſt follow Him the ſame Way. So great is our Arrogance and Pride, that God ſometimes cannot break it, but by ſome publick and exemplary Shame, which quickly brings us to our Senſes, and ſhows us our own Unworthineſs. This is the only Means of bringing us to a true Knowledge of our ſelves. And we have good Reaſon to believe, that many a Man has been loſt for want of theſe wholſome Trials. He that conſiders this as he ought, will certainly rejoice in Shame and Reproaches for God's ſake. *For whomſoever the Lord loveth, he chaſteneth in this manner*, to cure him of his Arrogance and Pride, and bring him to humble Thoughts of himſelf.

The Croſs a Sign of God's Love.

Wherein the true Following of Chriſt conſiſts.

§. 10. *Whoſoever will follow the bleſſed Jeſus, muſt deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs.* Many would freely follow Him, if they could do it without Difficulties and Sufferings; but theſe aiming chiefly at their own Eaſe and Contentment, whilſt they pretend to follow Chriſt, will find themſelves deceived at the laſt. *For it behoved Chriſt to die, and to ſuffer, and to enter into his Kingdom*, Luk. xxiv. 25. And if we intend to ſhare with Him in the Glories of his Kingdom, we muſt alſo be content to ſhare in his Sufferings; for unleſs we ſuffer with Him here, we ſhall never reign with Him hereafter. So then if we intend to follow Him, we muſt

cheerfully and contentedly ſubmit to every Croſs, whether inward or outward, deſerved or undeſerved, and by this means we ſhall at length arrive to the Glories which He himſelf attained by the Croſs. How many do we ſee every Day drudging in the Service of the World, venture Body and Soul; go into foreign Countries, venture through Fire and Sword, and all for a little uncertain Honour; and ſhall not we do as much to purchaſe the everlaſting Glories of Heaven, as they do for the trifling Riches and Glories of this World? In a Word, God manifeſts himſelf to us under the Croſs, as much as in the greateſt ſpiritual Viſitations; yea, we then receive greater Communications of heavenly Joy, when we are moſt empty of worldly Comforts.

The Croſs the Salt of our Fleſh.

§. 11. As Salt preſerves Fleſh from Putrefaction; ſo do Afflictions and Temptations keep the Soul from falling into Sin and Miſery. And the deeper a Man ſinks into the Centre of Humility by the Croſs, ſo much the deeper does he penetrate into the Heart of God, which is always open to receive and embrace the mortified and humble Soul. This is the great End propoſed by God, in all his various Methods of humbling us, that being ſenſible of our own great Corruption, we may die to our Selves, and live entirely unto Him. The Saints of Old, when under heavy Tribulations, could no otherways poſſeſs their Souls in Patience and Liberty, than by a total abandon and denial of themſelves, being ready to ſubmit to every Croſs which God ſhould lay upon them, even though it ſhould laſt their whole Life long; by this Humility, Obedience, and Self-denial, they were at laſt delivered. For having anſwered the End deſigned by God in ſending Croſſes upon

on them, He was pleaſed immediately to releaſe them.

§. 12. The laſt Comfort under the Croſs is, that thou canſt not be hurt by it, unleſs it be thine own Fault, by being fretful and impatient under it. Thou art very much in the Wrong, if thou thinkeſt thy ſelf injured by this or that Man, they cannot hurt thee if thou canſt keep thy Mind ſteady and even under its Burden. Be aſſured, that ſo long as thou art Maſter of thy Self and thy Paſſions, the whole World can do thee no harm. If then thou wouldeſt be ſafe againſt the Aſſaults of thine Enemy, be ſilent, anſwer not again, even as a dead Man *in whoſe Mouth are no reproofs.* Every Calumny and Reproach which the World ſhall caſt upon thee, ſhall be as ſo many Rays of Light, encircling thy Head with a Crown of Glory. I will conclude this Doctrine of the *Croſs* with juſt mentioning theſe three Degrees of Patience, in which true Victory conſiſts. The *Firſt* is, To ſuffer without Murmuring. The *Second* is, Not only to ſuffer patiently, but even to wiſh for ſuffering for Chriſt's ſake, from a pure Love of Him. The *Third* is, To rejoice in Suffering; and this is the moſt powerful and greateſt VICTORY of all.

Impoſſible for any to be hurt under it, but by himſelf.

A PRAYER

For lively FAITH in CHRIST.

Heb. xii. 2. *LORD Jeſus, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith! Give me thy Grace, that thy Word may ſo powerfully operate in my Soul, by its divine Virtue, that on the one Hand, I may perfectly underſtand that Myſtery of Iniquity which has infected all the Faculties of my Soul; and on the other Hand, may feel the Myſtery of Godlineſs, by Chriſt Jeſus, throughly renewed in me. Let Faith, as a Flame kindled from above, burn in me, and purifie all my Droſs and Uncleanneſs, and let thy divine Light ſo break forth in my Soul, that I may not only ſee the Wonders of thy Law, and the Secrets of thy Kingdom, but may alſo arrive at an intimate Union with Thee by Faith.*

§. 2 *Take away the Deformities my Nature has contracted by Sin, and cloath me with the*
Rev. xix. 8. *fine Linen of thy Righteouſneſs, that I may appear all Beautiful in thy Sight; grant that my Faith being firmly rooted in a contrite and humble Heart, may bring forth plentifully the Fruits*
Gal. v. 6. *of the Spirit, truly and vigorouſly working by Love. Deliver me from all falſe Notions about Faith, by which many have been led to Deſtruction, and have too late been undeceived.*

§. 3. *Teach me therefore, Lord, that the true Faith in thee,* is the Work of thy Almighty Power; *ſo that after I have been under the Diſpenſation of the Father, ſtricken with a lively Senſe of my own Corruption, and of the Vengeance due to my Sins, I may by Him*

at

at length be drawn to the Son, and being quickened by his enlivening Grace and Righteouſneſs, and ſealed with his Spirit, as the Earneſt and Pledge of my future Inheritance, I may again return to the Father, and be eternally happy in the Fruition of his Love.

Joh. vi. 44.

2 Cor. i. 22.

§. 4. *Grant me, merciful Jeſu! a deep Senſe of the divine Power of true Faith upon my Soul! Let my Faith be the Victory that may overcome the World, not only treading down the inward Seed of Sin, but alſo triumphing over the outward Allurements of the World! Do Thou ſo purifie my polluted Heart by Faith, that it may be a proper Habitation for thee, and that Thou mayeſt graciouſly vouchſafe to dwell in me.*

1 Joh. v. 4.

Act. xv. 9.

Eph. iii. 17.

§. 5. *And when I ſhall begin to feel the Power of this Evangelical Faith moving and operating in me, then, I earneſtly beſeech Thee to aſſiſt me with thy gracious Preſence, to water this tender Plant with plentiful Showers of thy Grace, that it may take deep Root downwards, and bear plentifully the Fruits of Life upwards. Let this Faith be an heavenly Light in me, by which I may more fully come to underſtand the deplorable Corruption of my Nature, and the promiſed Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, that by renouncing the former, I may be made partaker of the latter.*

§. 6. *Grant that this ſpark of Faith once kindled in me, may be blown into Flame, by daily aſpirations of devout Love. Let every Croſs and Tribulation, whether within or without, contribute to ſtrengthen this Life of Faith, which thy Word hath planted in me. Above all, give me the ſincere Milk of thy Word, to quench the longing Thirſt of my poor Soul, and let it ſo penetrate into all my Powers and Faculties, as to become the true and wholſome Nouriſhment of the new Man, till I grow up into a perfect Man,*

Eph. iv. 13. *Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt; and having at laſt paſſed through all the Temptations and Trials of true Faith, may paſs into the full Poſſeſſion of thoſe Joys, of which I have had but a ſlender Foretaſt here, and may for ever drink of thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure which are at thy right Hand; to whom be aſcribed all Praiſe, Honour and Glory, for ever.* Amen.

Aſpirations.

O Sweet Jeſu, enlighten me with the Brightneſs of thine eternal Light: And chaſe all Darkneſs from the Manſion of my Soul.

Send forth thy Light and thy Truth, to ſhine over the Earth; for I am a black and fruitleſs Soil, till I am warmed and made pregnant with thy Beams.

Shower down thy Grace from above: and ſink thy Heavenly Dew into my Heart.

Let the Flood-Gates of internal Piety and Devotion overflow the Face of the whole Earth: And enrich thy Church univerſal with the greateſt and beſt of Fruits.

O unite my Soul to Thee, for Thou only, O Lord, art ſufficient for the Soul that loveth Thee.

OF
True Chriſtianity.

The FOURTH BOOK.

St. *Bernard*, Sermon viii. Of the Lord's-Supper.

God will be ſo loved, as to have no Rival. The Love that is perfect, muſt be entire; and he ought to have no Competitor in Love, who has no equal in Merit and Goodneſs. And yet He expects to be ſo loved, as that all his CREATURES *may be loved with Him: Though not with the ſame Kind or Degree of Love. Every Creature proceeds from Him, the Fountain of Goodneſs, and is therefore Good. We ought therefore ſo to love the* CREATURE, *as bearing in it the Love and Goodneſs of the* CREATOR.

The Introduction.

That the Creatures are our Guides and Inſtructors to lead us to the Knowledge of God.

COL. i. 16, 17.

For by him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: All things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.

The Two Witneſſes of God.

§. 1. MOSES, the Prince of Prophets, in his Book of *Geneſis*, produces two very ſtrong Proofs of the Being of a God. The firſt is taken from the *Macrocoſm*, or great World. The *Second*, from the *Microcoſm*, or leſſer World, which is Man. And becauſe by theſe, the Maker and Preſerver of all Things is manifeſted, and in lively Characters engraved upon our Hearts; therefore the holy Scriptures do frequently appeal to them both. I alſo intend in this Book to follow the ſame Method, and by various Reflexions upon both the greater and leſſer World, endeavour to ſhew, that the Creatures are as it were the *Hands* and Meſſengers of God, in a ſound and Chriſtian Senſe, leading us to the Knowledge of God and Chriſt.

§. 2.

§. 2. And that a Deſign of this Nature is not foreign to the Title of this Book *of True Chriſtianity*, may be very eaſily made appear. If any Man think otherwiſe, I adviſe him to conſider throughly the fore-cited Place of *Col.* i. 16. as alſo the beginning of St. *John*'s Goſpel, and five Hundred other Places both of the Old and New Teſtament, as more particularly, *Pſal.* xix, civ, cxxxix. and what the Apoſtle mentions, *Rom.* viii. about *the Groaning of the Creature.* and 1 *Cor.* xv. 44. *of the Reſurrection of the Dead.* If the ſevereſt Criticks will calmly conſider theſe things, they will paſs a juſter Cenſure, not only upon the Deſign in general; but will alſo have a better Notion of our Saviour's own Method of Teaching, who uſed to explain and demonſtrate to his Diſciples and Followers the Myſteries of his Kingdom by beautiful Similitudes and Illuſtrations taken from the Book of Nature. But if they reſolve obſtinately to oppoſe this Method of Teaching, they muſt oppoſe the very Sacraments themſelves, which are no more than ſo many Teſtimonies and Seals of divine Grace taken from the great Book of Nature, and conſecrated to this very uſe. Laſtly, I remit them for ſatisfaction to St. *Ambroſe*, *Baſil*, *Theodoret*, and others, who have written largely and learnedly upon the Six Days Creation.

The Meditation of God's Wiſdom in the Creatures, is a part of Chriſtianity.

§. 3. Thus much may ſuffice in Defence of my Method and Deſign; to which I beg leave to ſubjoin only this Admonition, as the great Argument of the whole, *viz. That it is the Duty of a true Chriſtian, to uſe God's Creatures to his Honour and Glory, that God in all things may be glorified, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

§. 4. Obſerve now the Method by which the Creatures lead us unto God: Let us here con-

How the Creatures lead us to God.

conſider Him as an indulgent Father, inviting his little Children to come to Him; if they are backward, He offers them an Apple, a Pear, or ſome other engaging Preſent. This he gives, not that the Child ſhould be in Love with the Preſent, but be induced by it to be more fond of the Giver. Juſt ſo God deals with us, He invites us by all the engaging Invitations and Promiſes of the Goſpel; and not content with that, He offers us many great and noble Gifts, *doing us good from Heaven, ſending us fruitful Seaſons, and filling our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs*, Act. xiv. 17. All which Bleſſings are as ſo many Meſſengers ſent from God to draw us to himſelf, and to inſtruct us how to taſt the Goodneſs of the Creator, in that of the Creature.

They that love the World, are fond of the Gifts, and deſpiſe the Giver.

§. 5. But ſo perverſe is Man, that his Heart is entirely ſet upon his Gold and Silver, his fine Houſes, Eſtates, Honours, and Pleaſures, which, though moſt exquiſite and noble in their Kind, are yet in the Sight of God of no value; they are only given us by God, to allure and draw us to himſelf. For this reaſon it was, that God made Man ſo weak, needy, and helpleſs a Creature, that by the Variety of his Bleſſings, and multitude of his Benefits, He might draw him to himſelf, and teach him by theſe various Inſtances of his Love and Goodneſs, that all the Comfort and Sweetneſs which he taſts in the Creature, does really proceed from the Creator; and that He alone is able to Comfort, Relieve, and Support us, when theſe periſhing worldy Comforts forſake and leave us.

But the greateſt of all God's Meſſengers, the moſt excellent of all his Gifts, is the Lord JESUS CHRIST, the only begotten Son of God, in Him is all the Fulneſs and Per-

Perfection of Divine Love and Goodneſs. His Mercy is over all his Works, and by Him all Things *were made*, Joh. i. 3. *By Him all Things conſiſt*, Col. i. 17. *He upholdeth all Things by the Word of his Power*, Heb. i. 3. And now having ſaid thus much by way of Preface, I begin the firſt Part *of this Book*, treating in general of *the ſix Days Creation*, to promote the Knowledge, Glory, and Praiſe of God.

§. 6. But *of MAN* we ſhall ſpeak more particularly and diſtinctly in the latter Part; and I intreat my Readers that they will read the Epilogue to my Second Book, before they begin to cenſure me. For I here again proteſt and declare, that I deſire my Writings may be explained by the Doctrines of the *Augsburgh* Confeſſion.

CHAP. I.

Of the Light, the Work of the firſt Day.

Gen. i. 3. Pſal. civ. 2. 1 Joh. i. 5.

God ſaid, Let there be Light, and there was Light. He cloathed himſelf with Light as with a Garment. God is Light, and in him is no Darkneſs at all.

§. 1. IN thoſe Words of *Job*, Chap. xxxviii. 19. *Where is the Way where Light dwelleth? And as for Darkneſs, where is the Place thereof?* in theſe Words, I ſay, the holy Writer intimates, that the Nature *of Light* is very difficult to be explained, and that its original

The Origin of Light incomprehensible.

ginal is not to be comprehended by finite Understandings. For though we know something of it by our Sight, yet it is but little, however let us employ that little, to promote the Glory of God.

What Light is.

§. 2. First then, we say that LIGHT is a most noble, subtil, and pure Brightness and Clearness, separated from the Darkness of the *Macrocosme* in the Morning of the Creation, when God commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness. By this the World is enlightened and comforted, and all its beautiful variety is distinctly known and apprehended. By this, as some think, the Light of Life was conveyed into the great World, incorporating it self with every Creature. From this pure brightness and glorious Splendour, Light and Beauty flowed into the Globe of the Sun, constituting it thereby the great Luminary of the Day, by which it is solely governed and directed, *Jer.* xxxi. 35. Whence also the Creator himself calls the Light, *the Day*, Gen. i. 14.

Contemplation of the Light

§. 3. But as it is the Duty of a Christian to contemplate the Works of God with *spiritual* Eyes, so as therein to see the Creator, and by the Work be led to praise the Maker. Let us take a nearer View of this noble Subject, and see how the Light and the Sun bears witness of God and Christ.

§. 4. And the first Conclusion that naturally presents it self is this: If God created so beautiful, so lovely, so refreshing, so enlivening, clear, bright, and shining a Light; how much more charming, lovely, comfortable, and refreshing a *Light* is He himself? Therefore the Scholiast upon St. *Dyonisius*, to the Question, *Why God first of all created Light*? Answers: *Because from his own essential Light, the visible light does almost naturally proceed, as that which bears the nearest*

Resemblance

Resemblance to his own Nature; and therefore he calls Light a little after, *the Image of the Goodness of God*, adding, that the Light *in God*, was *transcendent and superintelligible*; in Angels and Men, *intelligible*; in the Sun, *visible*.

§. 5. And whereas God made *the Light*, that thereby the true external Form, Shape, and Beauty of the Creatures might be distinctly seen and apprehended, it follows, that there is also another secret and *mysterious Light*, whereby the internal Form and Signatures of the Creatures may be likewise known, from which nothing can be hidden or concealed. And this Light is the ETERNAL WISDOM OF GOD, which being compared with the natural and created Light, is called, *The Brightness of the everlasting Light*, Wisd. vii. 26. *How the Creatures are known by the Light.*

§. 6. Of this St. *Dyonisius* writes in these Words: *As the visible Light directs, governs, and fills the visible World; so the intellectual and heavenly Light, fills and enlightens all intellectual Beings; it purifies the Soul from Darkness and Error, and brings it into Communion with the Light of God. It is at first no more than a Twilight, or faint Glimmering of Light; but when it comes to be tasted, loved, and desired, then, in Proportion to our Love, it increases more and more unto the perfect Day. Wherefore this transcendent superintelligible Light, exceeds all Lights, being as it were the Centre and Fountain of them all. From its fulness it enlightens all Spirits, and being the Original of all Light, it comprehends under it all the Degrees of Spiritual, Angelical, Rational, and Natural Light, rendring them Immortal. And as ignorance separates deluded Souls from the Light; so the Presence of this Divine Light, collects, unites, perfects, and delivers from Ignorance and Error, all that are enlightened by it; it converts them to the Truth, reducing their various imaginations to the Standard* *The Distinction of Light.*

of pure and simple Truth, and fills their Souls with pure and uniform Light. Thus far St. *Dyonisius.*

The Light bears witness to the Love of God.

§. 7. From the Light of the Sun, also shines forth the most pure, deep, and ardent *Love of God.* For whom did He create the Sun? certainly not for himself, for He needeth not the Sun, nor any other created Light, being Himself a Light infinite and eternal. For our sakes therefore He created it. So that every Ray of Light proceeding from the Sun, is indeed a Ray of divine Love towards Mankind. And as the eternal Wisdom of God is likewise a bright Sun, clearly discovering his Mercy and Beneficence; therefore, according to the Nature and Properties of the visible Sun and Light, it may also be called, *an image of the Divine Goodness,* Wisd. vii. 26.

Without it all would be confusion.

§. 8. The created Light also determines the Order, Seasons, Bounds, Figures, and Distinctions of all created Things. For without it, the whole World would be nothing but Darkness and Confusion. So that upon this Account also, the Light is an image of the Divine Wisdom.

A magnetick Virtue in Light.

§. 9. The created Light, by its Brightness and Splendor, makes every thing turn to it; so the Goodness of God draws all things to it self, as the first Root, Centre, and Principle of all Things.

Light is pure.

§. 10. The Light of the Sun is pure and spotless: So is the Love of God towards Mankind. Hence also the Divine Wisdom being a spotless Light, is, according to this Property of the Sun, *the spotless Mirrour of the Divine Majesty,* Wisd. vii. 26.

Light flows plentifully from the Sun.

§. 11. As the Light flows plentifully and freely from the Sun; so does the Love of God descend plentifully upon us. As the Sun shines freely upon all, *without respect of Persons*; so does the Divine Love overflow upon all Mankind

kind. As the Light proceeds from the Nature and Essence of the Sun; so does the Love of God flow from the very Nature and Essence of the Divine Mind.

§. 12. Moreover, as God created the external Light for the greater World and visible Bodies; so it is worth enquiring, whether He did not at the same time provide an inward and *spiritual* Light for the Soul. And we have good Reason to conclude, that God took not less care of the Soul, than He did of the Body. And this Light of the Soul *is God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the ever-blessed and undivided Trinity*, by whom our Understandings are enlightened through Faith. This is the Meaning of that Place, *Isa.* lx. 1. *Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*

The outward Light bears witness of the inward.

God the Light of Souls.

§. 13. As the Sun enlightens the World, so does Christ the Soul. *He is the true Light that enlightens every Man that cometh into the World*, and is therefore called by the Prophet *Malachy*, *The Sun of Righteousness*, Chap. iv. 2. And St. *James* calls God, *the Father of Lights*, Chap. i. 17. And the Holy Ghost appeared upon the Apostles in the Form of fiery Tongues, *Act.* ii. 3. and from this eternal Light proceeds the Light of Grace, the Light of Wisdom and Divine Knowledge, the Light of Truth and Life, the Light of Joy and Consolation, the Light of God's Countenance, the Light of Faith and all Christian Virtues.

Christ the true Light.

§. 14. This Light is the chief Ornament, Beauty and Glory of the Creatures. Hence *Psal.* civ. 2. He is said *to be cloathed with Light as with a Garment. The Glory of the Lord*, Luk. ii. 9. is also the Beauty of the blessed Saints and holy Angels. The highest Majesty and Glory of the Elect in the other World, shall consist in Light and Splendor. *The Righteous*

Light the greatest Ornament.

shall shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, Matt. xiii. 43. Dan. xiii. 3. which was also expressed by the Appearance of the Woman cloathed with the Sun, *Rev.* xii. 1. *Lastly*, as the Light is the greatest Ornament of this visible World; so the everlasting Light shall be the chief Glory of the next World, or *Heavenly Jerusalem*.

The more Light the more Glory.

§. 15. The more Light any Creature has, the more Noble it is. This appears from the Angels, the Sun, Moon, Stars, Jewels, and precious Stones. So Virtue it self is a most glorious Light, and all the Children of God in the next World, shall be full of Light and Glory, and accordingly shall be distinguished, as one Star differeth from another Star in Glory, 1 *Cor.* xv. 41.

The refreshing Nature of Light

§. 16. Light is comfortable and refreshing: And who can doubt but, in the bright Day of Eternity, the blessed Saints shall be refreshed with Joy unspeakable? Without all question, the Light of the everlasting Sun of Righteousness shall give us infinitely more Delight and Joy, than this created Sun can do, which only gives light to a World of Misery and Sorrow.

Light awakens.

§. 17. The Light awakens those that Sleep, and puts them in mind of Rising. So Christ our Light rouses us from the Sleep of Sin. *Eph.* v. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee Light.* The Light directs the Traveller in his Way: So saith Christ, *Joh.* viii. 12. xiii. 46. *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me, walketh not in Darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.* Moreover, as the corporeal Light has a secret *vital Power* in it: So as Christ is our Light, *in him also was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men*, Joh. i. 4. *Psal.* xxvii. 1. *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, he is the Strength of my Life.*

Guides the Traveller.

Has a vital Power.

§. 18.

§. 18. As the Light cannot be seen any other ways than by it self: So God cannot be known but by himself, *Psal.* xxxvi. 10. *In thy Light we shall see Light.* And as the external Light *drives away the Darkness*, and the Spirits of Darkness: So Christ, who is the Light of God in us, chases away Infidelity, and all the Works of Darkness, and Satan. And God must speak the Word in us, as He did at the first Creation, *Let there be Light!* or we shall for ever remain in Darkness. This made the Psalmist say, *Psal.* xviii. 29. *Thou Lord shalt light my Candle: The Lord shall make my Darkness to be Light.* Luk. i. 79. *To give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death.* Rev. xviii. 1. *I saw an Angel coming down from Heaven; and the Earth was lightened with his Glory.*

Light cannot be seen but by it self.

How God is seen but in his own Light.

§. 19. When the Day-light is gone, the *Moon*, that obscure Regent of the Night, arises with a pale Lustre: So without the Light of Christ, Man is nothing but Darkness; and the boasted Light of *Reason* is nothing but dim obscurity. And as he would certainly be called a Fool, who should choose to be enlightened by the Moon, rather than by the Sun; so are they much more foolish, who prefer the Wisdom of this World, before the Wisdom of God in *Christ Jesus*. And as no body but a Mad-man would make use of the Light of a Candle in Sunshine; so no Man in his Senses would think himself more enlightened by the worldly Wisdom, than by the Divine. Strange Madness! That a Man should expect more Light from the Creature, than from the Creator, the Father of Lights, God blessed for ever! Whosoever duly apprehends my Meaning, he hath in him the beginning of the Divine, Eternal, and Heavenly

Without the Light, all is Darkness.

Wisdom, which is the Burden of the whole cxix. *Psalm*, and which is so gloriously described in the Book of Wisdom.

The Sun is the Ornament of Heaven.

§. 20. As the Sun is the Ornament of Heaven, so Christ is the Ornament of his Church, the new Heaven, and new Earth in their future Glory, where it will be manifested to all the World, especially to the Faithful, that He is *the Brightness of his Father's Glory, the express Image of his Person*, Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 15.

Light makes a Dwelling pleasant.

§. 21. As Dwellings are so much more pleasant, as they are more lightsome: So *God dwelleth in Light*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. And the Heavenly *Jerusalem* is described, as full of Sweet and Refreshing Light. *It has no need of the Sun, nor of the Moon, to shine in it: for the Glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof*, Rev. xxi. 23.

Directeth all Things.

§. 21. As the Light makes all Things *clear and plain*: So there is nothing in Heaven or in Earth, no Spirit, no Being, nor the very Thoughts of the Heart, can be hidden from the Light of divine Wisdom, *Heb.* iv. 12, 13. Hence the Psalmist says, *Psal.* xc. 8. *Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee, and our secret Sins in the light of thy Countenance.* And *Psal.* cxxxix. 2. *Thou understandest my Thoughts long before.* Wisd. vii. 23. *Wisdom goeth through all understanding, pure and most subtil Spirits.* All the Light communicates it self to all Creatures, and diffuses it self through the World: So God communicates himself to all Creatures, particularly to Man, delighting most of all in doing them good.

Is a Symbol of the Glorification of the Saints Bodies.

§. 22. Lastly, The Light and Sun are an Argument and Type of the Glorification of our Souls and Bodies at the Resurrection. For tho' the Glorification of our Souls be in some Degree accomplished in this Life by the Power of the Holy Spirit, according to that of the *Corinthians*.

thians, 2 Epiſt. iii. 18. *But we all with open Face beholding as in a Glaſs the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Theſe however are but the imperfect Beginnings, and firſt Glimpſes of eternal Happineſs; but hereafter both Soul and Body ſhall be cloathed with everlaſting Light and Glory. Hence St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. xv. 41. *There is one Glory of the Sun, and another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars: ſo is alſo the Reſurrection of the Dead.* Dan. xii. 3. *They that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever.* And *Matt.* xiii. 43. *The Righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father.*

§. 23. This was typyfied in the Transfiguration of our Lord, *when his Face ſhone as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as Snow*, Matt. xvii. 2. This was an heavenly or ſupernatural Brightneſs, the Splendour of the everlaſting Sun of Righteouſneſs. So likewiſe, *Exod.* xxxiv. 29. 2 *Cor.* iii. 7. The Face of *Moſes ſhone like the Brightneſs of the Sun, ſo that the Children of Iſrael could not look upon him.* And this was the Conſequence of a few Days Converſation with God; how great then muſt that Glory be, which will be the reſult of our eternal Union and Converſation with Him! And the Luſtre of *Moſes*'s Face made it terrible to look on, but the Glory of Chriſt was refreſhing and comfortable. *Typified in the Transfiguration of Chriſt's Body.*

§. 24. *Rev.* i. 14. The Eyes of Him that had the Seven Stars in his Hand, *were as a Flame of Fire.* And the ſame *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the eternal Light, ſhall ſo glorifie us at the laſt Day, that our whole Bodies ſhall glitter like Lightening, *Matt.* vi. 22. *Luk.* xi. 36. In ſhort,

we muſt know that our bountiful Creator has infuſed a lovely and celeſtial Light into all his Creatures. This is well known to all that are skilled in Chymical Operations, who know the Art of Separating pure Nature from the adherent Curſe of Impurity and Corruption, and reducing Bodies to their primitive and original Purity. And this may be properly called the natural *Glorification* of Bodies, and is an illuſtrious Argument and Teſtimony of the *Glorification* of our Bodies, in that Day when all our ſpiritual and bodily Impurities ſhall be done away.

CHAP. II.

Of HEAVEN, the Work of the Second Day. And how it bears witneſs of God, and the glorious Habitation of the Bleſſed.

GEN. i. 6, 8.

God ſaid, Let there be a Firmament in the midſt of the Waters: And God called the Firmament Heaven. Pſal. civ. 3. *Who layeth the Beams of his Chambers in the Waters, and maketh the Clouds his Chariot, and walketh upon the Wings of the Wind.* Pſal. xix. 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his Handy-work.*

Of the Matter of Heaven.

§. 1. THOUGH there be a great Diſpute amongſt Divines and Philoſophers, concerning the Matter and Subſtance of *Heaven*, we

we ſhall reſt ſatisfied with theſe Words of God, *Let there be a Firmament in the midſt of the Waters.* Which *Job* expreſſes, Chap. xxxvii. 18. *by ſtretching out the Heavens as a molten Looking-Glaſs.*

§. 2. From whence ſome perhaps would rationally ſeem to infer, that this *Firmament* between the Waters, was alſo it ſelf made of *Water*; which alſo the Word *Shammaim* ſeems to intimate. We ſhall not enter into this diſpute, but ſhall only ſay, that by the Order of the Elements we may conclude, that the material Heaven is the pureſt, cleareſt, and moſt ſubtil Matter of the great *Mundane Syſtem*: or Heavenly *Fire* or *Water*, free from all elementary Mixtures, a pure, tranſparent, ſpotleſs, and incorruptible Body. It is alſo endued with various Powers and Capacities of acting upon this lower World, being alſo expanded by the Hand of the Almighty into a moſt capacious and ſplendid Form, and incomprehenſible Sphericalneſs, not only for the better containing the Expanſion of the Air, and the terraqueous Globe, that neither of the Elements may move out of its Place, (for on this account alſo it is called the *Firmament*,) but that by the roundneſs of its Figure, it may more conveniently and equally diſpenſe its aſtral Influences upon this lower elementary World.

Whence it had the Name of Sham-maim.

§. 3. But for the better Underſtanding the Matter of Heaven, it will not be improper to conſider it in relation to the other Elements. As for *the Earth*, we ſhall find it is thick, dark, and heavy. The *Water* is more pure, ſubtil, and fine than the Earth. For the leſs earthy Mixture there is in the Water, ſo much the clearer it is. The *Air* is ſtill purer and clearer than the Water, being perfectly diaphanous and impalpable, ſo fine and pellucid, that it is im-

Conſidered in relation to the Elements.

imperceptible to the finest Eye. Now if there be so great a Difference betwixt Earth and Water, and betwixt Water and Air, in respect of Substance; it follows, that Heaven, which is exalted above the Region of the Air, is of the clearest and purest Essence. From whence it also follows, that being so pure, it is the more Spiritual, and endued with a greater Energy and Power of acting.

It is a Witness of God.

§. 4. And now, who can doubt, but that this admirable, bright, and pure Structure of Heaven, with all its wonderful Properties, is a strong Evidence and Witness of God? What is Heaven, and all the Beauty of Nature, (says one of the Ancients) *but an illustrious Mirrour, in which we view the Wonders of their Maker.* For if God created so pure, so glorious, so firm a Substance, as our weak Understandings cannot comprehend or explain; how pure, how glorious, eternal, spiritual, unsearchable, unutterable a BEING must that God be who created it. And if He has made so glorious a Heaven to overspread, surround, and enlighten Mankind, during their short abode here; how glorious, how illustrious a Mansion think we, has He reserved for us hereafter in the Region of Life and Immortality? Hence St. *Paul* tells us, 2 *Cor.* v. 1, 2. *We know that if this earthly House of our Tabernacle be dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our House which is from Heaven.*

The Heighth and Compass of Heaven.

§. 5. Next of all, as to the stupendious *Heighth*, Extent, and Compass of Heaven, to which the Earth is in Comparison no more than a single Point; how does it insinuate to us the immense and unsearchable Power and Wisdom of God? *As the Heavens are higher than*

the

the Earth, ſo are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts, than your Thoughts, ſaith the Lord, Iſa. lv. 9. Does not its *circular roundneſs* mind us of the Eternity of God? For of both there is neither Beginning nor End. Does it not alſo put us in mind of his *Omnipreſence*? For as the Heaven ſurrounds and encompaſſes all Things, ſo does the God of Heaven contain, ſupport, and comprehend all his Creatures. *Who hath meaſured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand? And meeted out Heaven with a Span, and comprehended the Duſt of the Earth in a Meaſure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance*? Iſa. xl. 12.

§. 6. And as in a Circle, no part can be called upper and lower; ſo God fills all things equally. Heaven and Earth are full of the Majeſty of his Glory; *He is not far from every one of us; in him we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts xvii. 28. For though there be Antipodes, and many other Creatures under us, as is demonſtrable from the Figure of the Earth; yet by the wonderful Power of God, the Heaven is every where over our Heads, and we look up directly towards it, by reaſon of the immenſe Bigneſs of a circular Body. Of this Roundneſs the Son of *Sirach* ſpeaks, *Eccluſ.* xliii. 12. *He compaſſeth the Heaven with a glorious Circle, and the Hands of the moſt High have bended it.* *The Figure of it.*

§. 7. Does not alſo the Firmament of Heaven remind us of the conſtant, eternal, and immutable Truth of God and his Word? For who is it that ſupports the Heaven from falling? Where are the Pillars that ſuſtain it? Or how does it hang, but upon the Word of God? *The Pillars of Heaven tremble*, ſaith *Job*, Chap. xxvi. 9, 11. *and are aſtoniſhed at his reproof. He holdeth back the Face of his Throne, and ſpreadeth his Cloud upon it.* And if by his Word He hath ſo

ſtrongly

ſtrongly fixed the Heavens, who can doubt but He will keep his Word and Promiſe to us for ever and ever? If *He ſupport the Heavens by the Word of his Power*, doubt not but He will alſo ſupport, protect, and preſerve thee for ever.

The Myſtical Heaven.

§. 8. But from this created Heaven, learn to raiſe thy Thoughts to the Myſtical one, 1 *Kings* viii. 27. *Where there is fulneſs of Joy, and Pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. xvi. 11. This St. *Paul* calls *Paradiſe, and the third Heaven*, 2 Cor. xii. 2. *And the Glory into which Jeſus Chriſt was received*, 1. Tim. iii. 16. This our Lord himſelf calls, *his Father's Houſe, where He is now preparing a Place for us*, Joh. xiv. 2. And laſtly, It is called, *the Heaven of Heavens*, 1 Kings viii. 27. Moreover, by Meditation upon this external, tranſient Heaven, thou mayeſt learn to deſcend into thy ſelf, into thine own Heart and Soul, for there alſo is Heaven, and the Habitation of God. *Thus ſaith the High and Holy One that inhabiteth Eternity, I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones*, Iſa. lvii. 15. Obſerve here the Preſence and Kingdom of God in thy Soul! But of this we have ſpoken largely, Book III.

The faithful Soul is the Habitation of God.

The new Heaven.

§. 9. Let this external Heaven lead thee to the new Heaven, of which St. *Peter* ſpeaks, 2 Epiſt. iii. 13. *We, according to his Promiſe, look for new Heavens, and a new Earth, in which dwelleth Righteouſneſs.* For though this viſible Heaven was created ſo pure by God, as not to be ſubject to Corruption; yet *the Heavens are not clean in his Sight*, as holy *Job* tells us, Chap. xv. 15. Therefore *they ſhall periſh*, as St. *Peter* tells us, 2 Epiſt. iii. 10. And *Pſal.* cii. 27. *They ſhall periſh, and wax old as doth a Garment, and as a Veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed.* Rev. xxi. 1. *I ſaw a new Heaven,*

and

and a new Earth, for the first Heaven and the first Earth were passed away. And he that sate upon the Throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. Isa. lxv. 17. *Behold, I create new Heavens, and a new Earth: and the former shall not be remembred nor come into Mind.* How beautiful, how illustrious will be this City of God, this heavenly *Jerusalem*, whose Builder and Maker is God? Or who can declare the Glory of that happy Place? *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him,* 1 Cor. ii. 9. Hence the Evangelist St. *John*, describes the new and heavenly City by all the precious and costly things in Nature. *The City*, he says, *was of pure Gold, like unto Chrystal; the Foundations were of precious Stones, the Gates of Pearls; that the City wants neither Sun or Moon, because the Glory of the Lord enlightens it.* In a Word, This is that Heaven, *in which God will be all in all,* 1 Cor. xv. 28.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Separation of the Waters from the dry Land; being the Work of the third Day.

That the Globe of the EARTH, hanging in the midſt of Heaven, is an Evidence of the Wiſdom and Omnipotence of God; that it is alſo a Store-Houſe or Treaſury of the Divine Bounty.

GEN. i. 9.

God ſaid, Let the Waters under Heaven be gathered together into one Place, and let the dry Land appear, and God called the dry Land Earth. Pſal. xxxiii. 5. civ. 24. *The Earth is full of the Goodneſs of the Lord.*

What the Earth is.

THE Earth is the heavieſt and groſſeſt Subſtance of the World, ſeparated from the Waters, and fixed by the Power of God to be the immoveable *Centre* of the Megacoſme, and receptacle of all the heavenly Influences. Therefore, as the Heavens is Spherical, ſo is the Earth, that it may the better receive the Influences of the heavenly Bodies, in union with the Water making up one Globe. This terraqueous Globe hangs in the Air by the Power of the Almighty, repleniſhed with the vital and inviſible Seeds of all the viſible Trees, Plants, and Vegetables.

Its Foundation.

§. 2. The ſtupendous Structure and Foundation of the Earth, is a moſt certain and wonderful

derful Witneſs of the Power of God. For by what Pillars is the Earth ſupported? or where are its Foundations?

A Controverſy of Philoſophers upon it.

§. 3. There is a great Diſpute amongſt the Naturaliſts, whether the Earth or dry Land be founded in the Waters; or whether, as being the heavieſt and groſſeſt Element, it ſinks to the loweſt Place, ſo as to be the Foundation or Subſtratum of the Waters? The Patrons of the firſt Opinion, build upon theſe Teſtimonies, *Pſal.* xxiv. 2. *He hath founded it upon the Seas, and prepared it upon the Floods.* And *Pſal.* cxxxvi. 6. *Who laid out the Earth above the Waters.* To which may be added, the Teſtimony of St. *Chryſoſtome*, *That God laid the Foundations of the Earth upon the Water.*

§. 4. Others aſſert the contrary, upon theſe Arguments. (1.) Becauſe the Earth is the heavieſt Element, and therefore ſunk to the loweſt Place or Centre of the World, where it naturally remains fixt and immoveable, and cannot but by Miracle be removed. For every Place being without its centre, is neceſſarily above it. So that if the Earth ſhould move out of its Place, it muſt move upwards, which is contrary to Nature. And for this they quote, *Pſal.* civ. 5. *Who haſt laid the Foundations of the Earth, that it never ſhould move at any time*; that is, the Earth is immoveably fixed upon its own Centre. (2.) They alledge the *Experience of Sea-Men*, who ſound the bottom of the Sea, and explain thoſe Paſſages of the Pſalms, which mention the *Separation of the Waters*, of the dry Land, as *Moſes* calls it, *Gen.* i. 9.

This decided by St. Peter.

§. 5 But let St. *Peter* decide this Controverſy, 2 Epiſt. iii. 5. *The Earth* (was made) *by the Word of God, ſtanding in the Water, and out of the Water.* In which Words the holy Apoſtle tells us, that the Earth ſtandeth in the Water,

and makes up one Globe with the Water; is founded upon it, and ſupported by it. But on what does this vaſt terraqueous Globe depend? Who bears it up? Where are the Pillars of it? He hath hung the Earth upon nothing, ſaith *Job*, Chap. xxvi. 7. For it hangs in the midſt of Heaven, born up in the expanded Air, begirt with the Waters, as with Girdles or ſwadling Bands. So ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* civ. 6. *Thou covereſt it with the Deep, like as with a Garment.* There is a great Congruity between Air and Water, ſo that they ſupport one another; as appears by the Clouds, which though they be vaſt Mountains of Water, yet are ſupported by the Air from falling; for the Power of Bearing and Suſtaining, is a particular Property of the Air. *Job* xxvi. 8. *He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them.*

§. 6. Now what can be more wonderful, than that the Earth ſhould be thus bound up, and held together by the Expanſion of the Air; and that the Elements ſhould be ſo cloſely penned up, that neither of them can ſtir from their Place? For as in an Egg, you firſt of all meet with the *White*, and in the middle hangs the *Yolk*, and both of them are within, bound up by a very fine Film or Coat, and without by a thick Shell, ſo that neither of them can ſtir from their proper Place: So do the Elements hang together and ſupport one another, whilſt the Firmament, or Heaven, ſupports them all, and keeps every thing in its own proper Place.

Order of Elements.

§. 7. This Foundation of the Earth in the Waters, and by the Waters, in the Centre of the vaſt Expanſe of Air, is a very clear Argument of the Divine Omnipotence. *Where waſt thou,* (ſaith He to *Job*, Chap. xxxviii. 4.) *when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? Who hath laid the Mea-*

An Argument hence for the Divine Omnipotence.

Measures thereof? Who laid the Corner-Stone thereof? Signifying thereby, that this Foundation of the Earth could not be comprehended by humane Understanding; but must be counted amongst the infinite Wonders of Omnipotence; of which this is not the least, that the Globe of the Earth should stand in the Waters, and yet not be swallowed up by them. Therefore saith holy *David*, Psal. xlvi. 2. *We will not fear tho' the Earth be moved, and though the Hills be carried into the midst of the Sea; though the Waters thereof rage and swell, and tho' the Mountains shake at the Tempest of the same.* And that the same thing is an argument of the Wisdom of God, is plain from *Prov.* viii. 29. where Wisdom says of her self, *when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth, I was with him,*&c.

§. 8. And this is that Earth, which, as the Psalmist tells us, *Psal.* cxv. 15. *God hath given to the Children of Men.* And though, as to its external Form, it appear to be a shapeless, hard, thick, dead, dry and cold Mass, yet is it in Truth, a living and noble Element, enriched by God with variety of Blessings, fruitful Energy, and seminal Virtues. These seminal Powers never rest; but, like hidden living Stars, are always labouring till they have produced their Fruits, adorned with beautiful Form, Symetry, Smell, Taste, and Colour, with external Signatures, representing their inward Virtues and Qualities.

The Earth the Gift of God to Man.

Seminal Virtues lodged in it.

§. 9. So then, out of the Earth, as out of a Bed-chamber, come forth all the Varieties of Plants and Vegetables, having exchanged their old Cloaths for a new, bright, and shining Dress. For the old tattered Garments of the preceding Year being dead and rotten, they come forth with exquisite Beauty, Smell, and Colour, and do as it were call and preach to

The Wonders of Vegetation.

Mankind in Words like these: "Look upon
'us, ye unbelieving Sons of Men, we were once
'dead, and are now alive again. We have laid
'aside our old Garments and Bodies, and are
'renewed in our Root and Original. Do ye also
'imitate us, *lay aside the old Man, and put on*
'*the new*, Eph. iv. 23, 24. being renewed
'in your eternal Fountain and Original,
'which is God your Creator, in whose Image
'ye were created. If ye do this, then in the
'Day of the righteous Judgment of God, when
'ye have lost your old Bodies, ye shall, like us,
'come forth out of the Earth, 1 *Cor.* xv. 42.
'with new Bodies, cloathed with immortal
'Glory, of which our new born Beauty is but
'a feint Resemblance; and whilst ye are in
'this World, *take not too much thought for the*
'*Body*, Matt. vi. 28. Consider us, whom the
'God of Nature has yearly, for so many thou-
'sand Years since the Foundation of the World
'to this Time, provided with beautiful and
'comely Cloathing, as an argument of his
'Bounty and Goodness. Consider our Virtues
'and Powers, which are given and laid out,
'not for our, but for your sake and benefit; we
'bloom and blossom, not for our good but yours;
'yea, the Blessing of God blossoms through us.

The Vegetables are all so many Witnesses of Divine Power, Wisdom, and Goodness.

§. 10. Among the Vegetables also a Man may discern ten Thousand Times ten Thousand Witnesses of the Goodness and Omnipotence of God. For here we have a perfect Collection of Drugs and Simples, an admirable and compleat Herbal; yea, a living one, not furnished with feint Draughts, and dead Pictures; but graved with living Characters and Impressions, to be read by every curious Spectator, but not to be fully understood by any, but Him that made them. And till we come fully to understand their divine Signatures, we cannot so perfectly

fectly know the Wonders of Providence contained under them.

§. 11. Every Herb and Plant has its proper Mark and *Signature*, which is nothing leſs than the Inſcription and Hand-Writing of God, whereby He hath moſt wonderfully and beautifully marked and diſtinguiſhed them all according to their ſecret Virtues and Qualities, and in moſt of them, the outward Form and Proportion, is a plain Mark or Token of their inward Virtues. One is marked with a Signature of relation to the Head, Eyes, and Teeth; another, to the Tongue, Hands, and Feet; a third, to the Heart, Head, Bladder, Reins, Wounds, and the like. All which are plain to be diſcerned by the curious Obſerver. Every Turf we tread upon is furniſhed both with Food and Phyſick. Yea; in the ſmalleſt Grain or Seed is manifeſted the unſearchable Wiſdom of God. He has created nothing in vain, and the minuteſt Part of the Creation is not to be overlooked or deſpiſed, ſince we know not the thouſandth Part of its Virtues. *The Signature of Plants.*

§. 12. But if from their *external* Forms and Signatures, we deſcend to their *internal*, extracting their Spirit by Chymical Preparation, ſeparating that pure Eſſence, which, being full of high Medicinal Virtue, is lodged by God in the outward Husk or Body, as a Diamond in a Casket, then indeed we ſhall truly taſt the Goodneſs of God in the Virtues of his Creatures, and bleſs Him with an unfeigned Heart, for the many comfortable Medicines He has provided for miſerable Man. *Their internal Form.*

§. 13. Conſider moreover, how the bountiful Creator has provided not only for Man, but alſo for the Fowls of the Air, and the Beaſts of the Field, how *He has provided Food for all Fleſh*, Pſal. cxxxvi. 25. cxlv. 15. How *God's Proviſion for all his Creatures.*

He *bringeth forth Graſs for the Cattle, and green Herb for the Service of Men; How he brings Food out of the Earth, and Wine that maketh glad the Heart of Man,* Pſal. civ. 14, 15. So that we may properly call the *Earth,* the Treaſury or Store-houſe of God, in which are laid up ſuch variety of Bleſſings both for Man and Beaſt: Upon which account the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Pſal.* xxxiii. 4. *The Earth is full of the Goodneſs of the Lord.*

Bread *the moſt noble and univerſal Nutriment.*

§. 14. A very wonderful Effect of this divine Goodneſs is, that BREAD ſuſtains the whole Body, ſo that in one ſingle Morſel is contained the Nouriſhment of all the Members of the external Body, and its virtue diffuſes it ſelf through the whole; whereas the other Vegetables are but particular, and appropriated by Nature to particular Parts and Uſes of the Body. And becauſe of this univerſal nutritive Quality that is in Bread, therefore the eternal Son of God calls himſelf the BREAD OF LIFE, *Joh.* vi. 35. denoting his ſpiritual and univerſal Power of nouriſhing and ſuſtaining the whole Man, *Body, Soul, and Spirit.*

The wonderful Growth and Vegetation of Plants;

§. 15. It is no leſs wonderful, that the greateſt Plant, yea, the greateſt Tree, with its Root, Trunk, Boughs, Leaves, Seed, Flowers, and Fruit, (each of which has either a nutritive or ſanative Virtue) ſhould be contained in a very ſmall Seed. And that every Year the ſame Catalogue of Plants and Trees, with their reſpective Fruits and Seeds, ſhould appear in their proper Order and Seaſon. All this muſt be reſolved into *the Spirit of the Seed,* containing in it all thoſe Powers, which ſucceſſively diſplay themſelves in ſo great a variety, ſize, bigneſs, thickneſs, and heighth. Which is indeed a Power very wonderful and amazing to any one that ſhall duly conſider it.

§. 16.

§. 16. I cannot alſo but take notice in this Place, how the Herbs and Graſs, upon which the Beaſts and Cattle feed, become Food for Man, being changed into the Milk and Fleſh of the Creatures that eat them. How even our Beds and Cloaths grow out of the Earth, foraſmuch as both Sheep and Birds live upon the Fruits of it. Laſtly, how the Sheep get their Wool, and the Birds their Feathers, from the Paſture of the Field.

Various Tranſmutations undergone.

§. 17. I ſhall not in this place ſpeak particularly of *Trees* and Plants; otherwiſe perhaps I ſhould have taken notice of the *Fig-tree* which was curſed by our bleſſed Saviour, *Matt.* xxi. 19. Of the Olive-tree, whoſe Branch the Dove brought into *Noah*'s Ark, *Gen.* viii. 11. Of the *Palm-tree*, to which the *flouriſhing State of the Righteous is compared*, Pſal. xcii. 13. Of the *Cedars*, and of the *Spices*, of which *Moſes* made the holy Ointment, *Exod.* xxx. 23. Of the generous *Spikenard*, which is a Type of the Holy Spirit, and of the Reſurrection of the Dead, being uſed in Embalming the Bodies, to preſerve them from Putrefaction. Of the *Vine* and its *Fruit*, and other Vegetables; from which the Holy Ghoſt draws beautiful Similitudes, to illuſtrate and explain to us, the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God.

Hints concerning ſome particular Trees and Plants.

§. 18. But as to *the Fruitfulneſs of the Earth*, *David* ſpeaks of it very nobly, *Pſal.* lxv. 9, 10. *Thou viſiteſt the Earth, and bleſſeſt it: thou makeſt it very plenteous. The River of God is full of Water: thou prepareſt their Corn, for ſo thou provideſt for the Earth. Thou watereſt her Furrows, thou ſendeſt Rain into the little Valleys thereof: thou makeſt it ſoft with the Drops of Rain, and bleſſeſt the increaſe of it. Thou crowneſt the Year with thy Goodneſs, and thy Clouds drop Fatneſs.* That is, every Month produces its peculiar Fruit out of

The Fertility of the Earth, to what to be aſcribed.

its *Treaſury*, the Boſom of the Earth. This natural fertility of the Earth, has been very much reſtrained and contracted by the Curſe of the Almighty; hence come the Tares that choak the good Corn. *Curſed is the Earth*, ſaith God, *Gen.* iii. 17. *Thorns and Briars ſhall it bring forth to thee.* Fruitfulneſs therefore muſt be regarded and prayed for, as the Gift and Bleſſing of God, without which, a Man can neither Plough, nor Sow, nor Plant with Succeſs. *For it is God that giveth the Increaſe.* Thus we are to underſtand, *Pſal.* cvii. 34. *A fruitful Land maketh he barren, for the Wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.*

What Reflexion ought hence to be made.

§. 19. Now let our Meditations of the Fruitfulneſs of *this* Earth, carry our Thoughts to that *new one which we expect, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs*, 2 Pet. iii. 13. There the Curſe, to which the preſent Earth is in Bondage, ſhall have no place, it ſhall be the Region of perfect Bleſſedneſs, and Life eternal. This is the new Paradiſe, full of celeſtial Sweetneſs, Joy, and Pleaſure, then ſhall we truly ſing this Song, *the Flowers appear in the Earth*, Cant. ii. 11.

Of the Mountains.

§. 20. I come next to the Mountains, which by their Heighth and Beauty, are no ſmall ornament to the Earth. Of theſe the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* civ. 8. *The Hills aſcend, and the Valleys deſcend into the Place which thou haſt appointed for them.* The Moutains are in a more particular Senſe the Treaſury or Mint of God, in which all ſorts of Metals are prepared and formed. Theſe are as it were ſo many Chymical Furnaces, in which the Matter of all Metals and Minerals is ſeparated and brought to maturity. In them are included the four Elements, *Fire*, and Vapour; *Air*, and Smoak; *Earth*, and *Water*; the Root and Seed of Metals, is *the Aſtral Spirit*; and the Earth or Soil in which they grow, are Stones.

§. 21.

§. 21. Providence has therefore raiſed the *Mountains* above the Surface of the Earth, and brought them nearer to Heaven, that the natural Influence of the celeſtial Bodies, in the Preparation and Concoction of Metals, might be ſo much the ſtronger, as experience ſhews us it is. Thus alſo it is obſerved, that the beſt Simples grow upon high Mountains, where the Aſtral Influences are ſtronger and more abundant; and whenſoever they are tranſplanted into Gardens, they quickly degenerate and loſe their Virtue. So that it was ſaid of *Hippocrates*, that all the Herbs he uſed in the Practice of Phyſick, were generally gathered from Hills and mountainous Places.

The Mountains have the greateſt ſhare of the celeſtial Influences.

The beſt Herbs grow upon Hills

§. 22. And this is the trueſt Cauſe, why in ſome Mountains particular Herbs and Minerals are found, that they enjoy a particular Influence of Heaven, according to their Poſition, which others have not; and it is highly reaſonable to believe, that where there is a more kind Influence than ordinary upon any Mountain, there is ſomething peculiar in the Nature of the Place which attracts thoſe Influences to them. So that we muſt not imagine, that Mountains are ſcattered here and there at random, as Boys raiſe heaps of Stones or Sand; but rather, that, by a particular and regular Diſpoſition of Providence, they are ſubjected to certain Influences and Poſitions of the Heavenly Bodies, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* civ. 8. *The Mountains aſcend, and the Valleys deſcend, even to the Place which thou haſt appointed for them.*

Mountains diſpoſed by Providence.

§. 23. Now the Mountains ought to put us in Mind of *the Protection of God*; and ſo the Expreſſion is uſed in Scripture, *Pſal.* cxxi. 1. *I will lift up mine Eyes unto the Hills, from whence cometh my Help.* As alſo of the Church of God, *the Mountain of the Lord's-Houſe*, Iſai. xlv. 8.

Mountains of God.

Pſal.

Pſal. lxxii. 3. *The Mountains ſhall bring Peace, and the little Hills Righteouſneſs.* Under this Head alſo we may conſider the little Springs, and Rivers of Waters that run through the Valleys, adorning, enriching, and beautifying the Earth. For though in ſtrict Propriety the Fountains belong to the Work of the *fifth Day*; yet the Royal Prophet, *Pſal.* civ. 10. puts the *Mountains* and *Springs* together, becauſe the Rivers ariſe from the Hills, and equally partake of the celeſtial Influences with them.

Springs of Water.

The Origine of Springs.

§. 25. There have been many curious Diſſertations concerning the *Origine of Springs and Rivers.* Some are of Opinion, that Springs have a kind of proper Seed, out of which they grow, as naturally as a Tree from a Root or Kernel; which when grown to ſome maturity, ſpreads it ſelf into various Branches. Juſt ſo the Springs throw themſelves into various Branches or Channels. And there are Places in the World, which ſome Years ago were plentifully ſtored with Springs and Fountains, which are now entirely dried up, like Trees that are dead at Root. And this is owing to a certain wonderful Harmony, and occult Sympathy between theſe and the heavenly Bodies. So where there is a great abundance of Springs, it is obſerved to be a happier Climate, and a more fruitful Soil; and when the celeſtial Influences are ſtopt, and the * watery Planets ceaſe to act, then the Springs uſed to dry up; juſt as great Rivers and Streams of Water do, in very hot and dry Seaſons. An inſtance of this we had in the Year 1601. when it had not rained for a long time together, in *Holland* and *Friezeland*, there grew no Graſs, the Springs dried up, ſo that the Cattle were forced to eat the very Roots of the Graſs, and ſometimes the Earth it ſelf, to ſatisfie their Hunger. Which Cala-

* *Hyades ſignum pluviale capellæ.*

Calamity, as it is generally a forerunner of very great Evils, ſo it is a ſtrong Argument of the magnetick Sympathy that is betwixt the Heavens and the Earth.

§. 25. *Solomon* tells us, *Eccl.* i. 7. *All the Rivers run into the Sea, yet the Sea is not full: Unto the Place from whence the Rivers come, thither they return again.* Though the Waters, paſſing out of the Sea through the Earth, are ſweetned by percolation; yet they do not every where break forth, nor make Springs in all Places, but according to the ſecret Order and Appointment of Providence; ſo ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* civ. 10. *He ſendeth the Springs into the Rivers.* And their perpetual flowing, and continual Streams, are not only a great Bleſſing, and Miracle of Divine Power, but are alſo an apt repreſentation of eternal * Life. I need not here ſpeak particularly of thoſe hot Streams which ſcald off the Feathers of Birds that are thrown into them; the Mineral and Healing Baths, or the acid and ſalt Springs, or that famous Fountain in *Africa*, which in the Night time is ſo exceſſive hot that it cannot be touched, and by Day ſo cold, that it cannot be drank; or others in the deſolate and wilderneſs Parts of the Earth, ſerving for the Nouriſhment and Refreſhment of the Creature. *Of which all the Beaſts of the Field do drink, and at which, the wild Aſſes quench their Thirſt*, Pſal. civ. 11.

The Rivers proceed from the Sea.

* *Perpetui fontes, vitæq; perennis imago.*

§. 26. Now if God take ſo much care of the Beaſts of the Earth, ſhall He not much more take care of us? If *the Beaſts of the Field cry unto him, when the Rivers are dried up*, Joel i. 20. how much more ought we to call upon Him in all our Diſtreſſes? And whereas thoſe Places are generally moſt Pleaſant, where there is the greateſt Plenty of Springs and Rivulets; ſo the Birds generally reſort thither, and *ſing among the*

What Reflexions we ſhould hence have.

the Branches, Pſal. civ. 12. As if God had taken care to fill even the Deſerts with their Muſick, that ſo every Place might reſound with his Praiſes, and that Man might learn, even from the brute Creatures, that not only himſelf, but all the Creatures, were made to praiſe and glorifie God.

The Fountain of Grace.

§. 27. Now theſe natural Fountains ſhould put us in Mind of *the Fountain of Grace and Salvation*, the Water of Life, even *Jeſus Chriſt*. Iſa. xii. 3. *With joy ſhall ye draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation.* Pſal. xxxvi. 10. *With thee is the Well of Life, and in thy Light we ſhall ſee Light.* Iſa. lv. 1. *Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters.* Rev. vii. 17. *The Lamb that is in the midſt of the Throne ſhall feed them, and lead them forth unto living Streams of Water, and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.*

Seven principal Products of the Earth.

§. 18. The civth Pſalm, which gives us a beautiful Account of the Work of the third Day, takes particular notice of *ſeven* illuſtrious Creatures of God, all proceeding from the Earth, and all capable of a ſpiritual Senſe. *Firſt of all* indeed he ſpeaks of *the Earth* in general, how God laid its Foundations, divided it from the Waters, adorned it with Mountains, and watered it with Springs. Thence deſcending to *Particulars*, he takes notice of Seven of its remarkable Productions. (1.) The *Dew*, wherewith he waters the Mountains, though that would ſeem to be rather the Effect or Product of the Air. (2.) The *Graſs*. (3.) *Bread*. (4.) *Wine*. (5.) *Oil* or *Balſam*. (6.) The *Fruits of Trees*. (7.) *Birds and Beaſts*. All which are plainly expreſſed in the civth Pſalm.

Clouds cover the Mountains.

§. 29. Thus he ſpeaks, Ver. 13. *He watereth the Hills from above: the Earth is filled with the Fruit of thy Works.* Thus we often ſee with admiration

miration the Clouds hovering upon the Mountains, like Multitudes of armed Men, and dropping Showers of Plenty upon the Hills, *as the Bottles of Heaven*, Job xxxviii. 37. *then God doth truly water the Hills from above.* Sometimes alſo adding his Dew, which has wonderful affinity and relation to the Mountains, watering and refreſhing them with great Plenty. Thus it continually watered the little *Hill of Hermon in Judea*; and the Mountains of *Gilboa*, where *Saul* and *Jonathan* his Son were ſlain. Therefore *David* ſaid, *Ye Mountains of Gilboa, let there be no Dew, neither let there be Rain upon you*, 2 Sam. i. 21.

The Origine of Dew.

§. 30. The *Origine* of Dew, is from the Womb of the Morning; by the *Morning*, we underſtand the Beams of the Sun, piercing and ſhining through the clear thin Clouds, juſt as when we ſet a Candle or Light behind a Glaſs full of clear Water, it ſeems to ſpread a greater Brightneſs than the bare Light it ſelf: So then in thoſe clear thin Clouds, the Sun-Beams generate Dew, which afterwards falls ſoftly upon the Earth. Thus by way of Compariſon it is ſaid, *Pſal.* cx. 3. *The Dew of thy Birth is of the Womb of the Morning.* Which many underſtand of the Incarnation of the Meſſiah; who being the Son of God, and the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, cloathed himſelf with a bright and pure Cloud of Humanity in the Womb of the Virgin, and became Man; juſt as the Sun-Beams, penetrating the bright Morning Clouds, produce the Dew of Heaven. And by the ſame imperceptible Way, the Children of God are even now regenerated by Faith, and by the Holy Spirit in Baptiſm; and as the Dew is the Birth of the Morning, ſo ought we to be born of GOD.

§. 31.

The Uſes and Effects of it.

§. 31. So much for the Origin of Dew; the Uſes and Effects of it are expreſſed in theſe Words: *The Earth is filled with the Fruit of thy Works.* For it is the Property of Dew, *to make the Ground rich and fruitful*, to refreſh the Flowers ſcorched with exceſſive Heat, from whence at laſt the Bees, by a wonderful and artful mixture, draw their Honey. Sometimes we ſee a ſort of Honey-Dew lying upon the Leaves, as did the Manna heretofore. Juſt ſo, *the Goſpel*, like a ſpiritual Honey, is compoſed of the Dew of the Holy Spirit; and *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the Flower of all Flowers. From what has been ſaid, it appears, that all the Fruits of the Earth are nouriſhed and refreſhed from above. For *the Rain* nouriſhes the Roots, *the Dew* refreſhes the Flowers, and *the Froſt* the Leaves, foraſmuch as it mellows and ſweetens all ſorts of Herbs.

Dew a Type of Peace.

§. 32. Nor is it without reaſon that *Peace* is compared to Dew, *Pſal.* cxxxiii. 3. For as the Dew is generated by the Morning: So Peace proceeds from *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is himſelf the Morning-Star, and the Prince of Peace; where Chriſt liveth, reigneth, and worketh, there is perpetual Peace, *Rom.* xiv. 17. *The Kingdom of God is Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* Matt. v. 9. *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers; for they ſhall be called the Sons of God.* For they are begotten of God, as the Dew out of the Womb of the Morning; as the Dew makes all Things lively, freſh, green, and flouriſhing; ſo alſo does Peace; which therefore every good Man ought to beg of God, the Prince and Father of Peace.

And of the Fertility of the Divine Word.

§. 33. And whereas, in the laſt Place, it is ſaid, *that the Earth is filled with the Fruit of God's Works*: it ſignifies, that the *Word* of God the Creator, is ſtill as powerful and efficacious as for-

formerly it was, when He ſpake the Word, ſaying: *Let the Earth bring forth Graſs, the Herb yielding Seed, and the Tree yielding Fruit*: So that all Things, from the Beginning of the World to this Day, ſpring from the Word of God, as from an eternal root and fountain of divine Bleſſing. Hence that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* lxv. 10. *The River of God is full of Water*; ſo that the Earth is as it were a great Granary or Treaſury, in which are laid up plentiful Proviſions, both for Man and Beaſt.

§. 34. *Secondly*, The Prophet ſays, *He produceth* Graſs *for the Cattle.* Nor is that the leaſt of God's Bleſſings; for how could ſo many wild as well as tame Beaſts, that miniſter to the Neceſſities of Man, how, I ſay, could they ſubſiſt, ſhould the Graſs fail, even for one Summer? And it is very wonderful, that when in very dry Weather one would not think their could be Graſs enough to ſupport the Beaſts that are to eat it, yet they ſtill make a ſhift to live upon it; which I can account for no other Way, than that it grows as much by Night as it is eaten by Day. Or as the Poet ſays: *Another Uſe thereof for the Cattle.*

Et quantum longis carpunt armenta diebus
Exigua tantum gelidus ros nocte reponit.

The Paſtures ſhorn by Day, the ſprightly Dew
Does ev'ry Night abundantly renew.

From whence we learn, how merciful God is to Mankind, and how liberally He provides for our Neceſſities; hence, though the Graſs may ſeem to be the leaſt and meaneſt of all the Bleſſings of God, yet we cannot be ſufficiently thankful for it. So true is that Saying, *The leaſt of God's Bleſſings exceeds our higheſt Gratitude.*

§. 35.

A farther Proof hence of the divine Providence.

§. 35. This, beſides what I have already hinted, may furniſh us with new Proofs and Arguments of the *Divine Providence.* (1.) He that conſiders that God takes care of the Graſs of the Ground, cannot queſtion, but that He takes much more care of him and his Affairs. (2.) It may put us in Mind of *our own Vanity. For all Fleſh is Graſs, and the goodlineſs thereof as the Flower of the Field,* Iſa. xl. 6. (3.) It may alſo miniſter *Comfort* under Afflictions and Perſecutions, according to *Pſal.* xxxvii. 1, 2. *Fret not thy ſelf becauſe of the Ungodly, neither be thou envious againſt the Evil-doers: for they ſhall ſoon be cut down as the Graſs, and wither as the green Herb.*

The Proviſion of Bread.

§. 36. Thirdly, *Bringing forth Graſs for the Service of Men, that he may bring Food out of the Earth, and Bread to ſtrengthen Man's Heart,* Pſal. civ. 12. Now the very Notion of *Bread* implies in it a great variety of miraculous Bleſſings, both natural and ſupernatural. *Firſt of all,* it inſinuates to us God's paternal Affection towards us. For a *Father* naturally cares and provides for his Children. So *Matt.* vii. 9. *What Man is there of you, whom if his Son ask Bread, will he give him a Stone?* Let us remember then that God is *our Father,* for this purpoſe He made us needy and indigent Creatures, ſurrounding us with Infirmities and Neceſſities. So that our very Hunger and Thirſt are as ſo many Monitors to lead us unto God; and every bit of Bread that we eat, ſhould put us in Mind of the paternal Affection and Goodneſs of God.

What every bit of Bread ſhould put us in Mind of.

The Wiſdom of Providence in making this Proviſion.

§. 37. (2.) Let us admire and reverence the *wiſe Diſpenſation of Providence,* which aſſigns to every Man his convenient Portion of Bread, ſo that no Man has reaſon to complain *that he is forgotten before God,* Heb. xiii. 5. (3.)

By

By Bread, we may learn *the Wiſdom of God.* For in *Pſal.* civ. 16. God is ſaid *to bring forth green Herb for the Service of Men, that he may bring Food* (or *Bread*) *out of the Earth.* The Bread which we eat, is at firſt nothing but *Graſs*, which growing up into *Ears*, and ſo into Corn, ſupplies us with Bread, which at laſt is turned into our Body and Blood. Which miraculous Operation, gives us a pretty Image of our Creation, foraſmuch as even to this Day He creates the Fleſh and Blood of Man out of the Earth, ſo that we may properly call it our *Mother*, (Ecclus. xl. 1.) and ſay, that *in God we live, and move, and have our being*, Act. xvii. 28. For the Nutritive Virtue in Bread, is the very Word of God. And if God ſhould withdraw it, then all Fleſh and Blood would wither and decay as a Flower, or as the Graſs of the Field. And this gives light to that Place of St. *Matthew*, Chap. iv. 4. *Deut.* viii. 3. *Man doth not live by Bread alone.*

§. 38. (4.) The ſpecifick *Property* of Bread is hinted to us in theſe Words, *Pſal.* civ. 17. *Bread to ſtrengthen Man's Heart.* For every other kind of Food, by being daily eaten, becomes nauſeous to us, but Bread never does. So that Bread is the *univerſal* Food, containing in it all the nutritive Qualities of every other ſort of Food, which borrow their Virtues from it, as the Planets do their Light and Power from the univerſal Luminary *the Sun.* And this we may conceive to be the Reaſon of this great Virtue that is in Bread, that being the moſt common and ordinary Food, every Man might find in it wherewithal to ſupport Life, though he ſhould have nothing elſe. As the Spirit of many Vegetables may be reduced into a very ſmall Body, ſo the univerſal Nature of Bread is contained in every little Piece. For Man is a lit-

The ſpecifick Property of Bread.

tle World, and the Properties of the great one, or of created Nature, are as it were abbreviated and epitomized in him. So then if a Man may ſupport his Life by a little Piece of Bread, it follows, that univerſal Nature does as it were concentre in that piece of Bread, for the Suſtenance of Man, who ſprings alſo, as to his Body, from the ſame Root of univerſal Nature. *For ſuch as the Principles of our Compoſition are, ſuch muſt our Nouriſhment be.* In a word, whatever we eat or drink, ought to be looked upon as a Miracle of Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs.

Chriſt the Bread of Life.

§. 39. *Laſtly, The ſtrengthening Faculty of Bread, puts us in Mind of the Bread of Life,* which is *Chriſt.* So *Joh.* vi. 35. *I am the Bread of Life, he that cometh to me ſhall never Hunger, and he that believeth on me ſhall never Thirſt.* For in this Bread of Life, all the Powers of Heaven and Earth, yea, and all the Power of God, is contained; becauſe *it pleaſed God that in Him all Fulneſs ſhould dwell,* Col. i. 19. *and that of it we ſhould all receive, Grace for Grace,* Joh. i. 16. and by Him, *be filled with all the Fulneſs of God,* Eph. iii. 19. Bleſſed is he that eateth this Bread! The earthly Bread cannot ſave us from Death, but he that eateth of Chriſt, the Bread of Life, ſhall never die.

Of Wine.

§. 40. The *fourth* Thing mentioned is *Wine, that maketh glad the Heart of Man,* Pſal. civ. 16. By this excellent Creature, God gives us a plain Proof of his tranſcendent Goodneſs and Love to Man. Wine was given (1.) *to drive away Sorrow from our Hearts.* So we read, *Prov.* xxxi. 6. *Give ſtrong Drink to him that is ready to periſh, and Wine to thoſe that be of heavy Hearts, that they may remember their Miſery no more.* How wonderful is the Love of God towards us, who is ſo far from deſiring to have us over-born with Sorrow, that He has provided even *natu-*

The Uſes and Benefits for which given.

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al Means to refreſh and comfort us! And as or the dejected and broken Spirit, He refreſhes hat ſupernaturally by the generous Wine of the Holy Spirit, and celeſtial Conſolation, drawn rom the living Vine, the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. This is the Wine mentioned in the Song of *Solomon*, Cant. ii. 5. *He brought me to the Banqueting-Houſe*, (or *Houſe of Wine*, as the Margin eads it.) This was the Wine the holy Prohets drank of, as *Iſa.* xii. 2. lxi. 10. And *David*, Pſal. xxxiv. 1. lxiii. 12. which made hem break forth into Songs of Joy and Exultation.

1. *To refreſh the broken Spirit.*

§. 41. (2.) Wine was given by God *to comort the Sick*. For Wine has a Spirit in it proer to excite the natural Heat of the Blood, nd quicken the vital Motions of the Heart. And this is another Inſtance of the wonderful ove of God, and a very great one it is; yet erves to put us in Mind of a greater; *viz.* of hat moſt generous Wine that was preſſed from he bloody Wounds of the true Vine, the Lord *eſus Chriſt*, and which is the only ſovereign emedy for the diſeaſed Soul. *He waſhed his arments in Wine, and his Cloaths in the Blood of he Grape*, Gen. xlix. 11. *Laſtly*, (3.) It was iven, that *the Aged*, whoſe Lamp of Life is lmoſt ſpent, might invigorate the languid lame with a Glaſs of generous Wine, and ake it burn the brighter. This may put us in lind of the *ſpiritual old Age of the Church*. For s the Sight, Hearing, and all the other Powrs of Nature, are broken and decayed by Age: o now Faith is extinguiſhed, Charity is cold, Hope languiſhes, and the whole myſtical Body f Chriſt decayeth every Day more and more. *Vhen the Son of Man comes, ſhall he find Faith in he Earth?* Luk. xviii. 8. And *Iſa.* xl. 29. God romiſes the Faithful, that He will *renew their*

2. *To comfort the Sick.*

3. *To invigorate the Aged.*

Strength, that they may mount up as Eagles. And Chap. xlvi. 4. He promiſes, *that he will carry them even to old Age.* To which alſo belongs that Promiſe, *Pſal.* xcii. 15. *They alſo ſhall bring forth more Fruit in their Age, and ſhall be fat and well-liking.*

Of Oil. §. 42. The *fifth* Thing is, *Oil to make him a cheerful Countenance.* By which we are to underſtand, the precious Balſam or Spikenard uſed among the *Jews*, and other *Eaſtern* Nations, when they were more than ordinary joyful, or intended to treat their Gueſts after the beſt Faſhion, and which diffuſed a wonderful Strength and Vigor through their whole Bodies. In this Senſe we are to underſtand *Pſal.* xxiii. 5. *Thou anointeſt my Head with Oil.* So our Bleſſed Saviour, when He was entertained by *Simon*, was anointed with Oil, in token of a more than ordinary welcome, *Matt.* xxvi. 7. And *Luk.* vii. 44, 46. He upbraids another of that Name, a Phariſee, that he had not ſhown him the ſame Reſpect. *My Head with Oil*, (ſaith He) *thou haſt not anointed; but this Woman hath anointed my Feet with Ointment.* And ſo great was the Virtue of theſe *Eaſtern Unguents*, that they uſed them in Embalming the Dead, and by that means preſerved them many Hundred Years from Corruption, as appeared in the Body of *Alexander the Great*, which was found in the Time of *Auguſtus*, as freſh as if it had been interred but yeſterday, though it had lain above 300 Years. And this Balſam is a proper Repreſentation of that Oil, with which the Son of God, according to his humane Nature, was anointed without Meaſure. Hence the holy Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xlv. 8. *Wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladneſs above thy Fellows.* And *Joh.* i. 16. *Of his Fulneſs we have all received*; which is nothing elſe but

The Uſes and Benefits hereof.

that Unction by which he teacheth us all Things, 1 Joh ii. 20. and by which our Souls ſhall be preſented before God all over beautiful, and adorned with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. *When this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality.*

§. 43. The *ſixth* Thing mentioned is, *the Trees of the Lord* (which) *are full of Sap: even the Cedars of Libanus which he hath planted*, Pſal. civ. 16. There are many ſtrange things to be conſidered in Trees: Of which, two are more particularly taken notice of in Holy Scripture. The *Firſt* is, That whereas they ſeem to be dead all the Winter, yet upon the return of the Spring, they are full of Sap, and produce firſt Leaves, and afterwards Fruit, in a manner plainly Miraculous, and ſuch as no Art can imitate. For where is the Artiſt, that from the Juice of any Tree or Vine, can form an Apple or a Grape? The Birch-Trees do ſo overflow with Sap in Spring-time, that they Tap them, to ſave the Trees from dying. In *Ferro*, one of the *Canary* Iſlands, there is no Spring, River, Fountain, or Rain; but to make amends, there are certain Trees, from which there drops ſo great a quantity of Water, as is ſufficient for the Inhabitants and Cattle of the Iſland. *Secondly*, Whereas it is ſaid, *That the Lord hath planted them.* We muſt underſtand it of his creating *Word*, Gen. i. 12. By the Power of which, new Trees daily ariſe to ſupply the Room of thoſe that die or are cut down. This Bleſſing will cleave to the Earth as long as it laſts, becauſe the Word of the Lord is the univerſal Root and Seed of all Things that ariſe out of the Earth. Now the Trees, with their Fruits, may put us in mind of that *Divine Charity* which ought to be in us. For as theſe freely beſtow their ſeveral Fruits upon Man; ſo

Obſervations concerning Trees.

ought we to be affected towards God, and towards one another; *that we may be Trees of Righteouſneſs, the Planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified,* Pſal. xcii. 13. Iſa. lxi. 3. Laſtly, They put us in Mind of the *Tree of Life,* with its Fruits, even *Jeſus Chriſt* crucified: Of which whoſoever eateth, ſhall live for ever, *Rev.* xxii. 2.

And concerning Birds.

§. 44. *Seventhly,* The *Birds* are the Product, or at leaſt a very great Ornament, of the Earth. For though they have their Original from the Water, yet they build upon the Trees, and help to furniſh our Tables, as do alſo the wild Beaſts. *There the Birds build their Neſts, and the Fir-Trees are a dwelling for the Stork. The Hills are a refuge for the Wild-Goats, and ſo are the Stony-Rocks for the Coneys,* Pſal. civ. 17, 18. And *Job* xxxix. 1, 5, 18, 26. *Knoweſt thou the time when the Wild-goats of the Rock bring forth? Who hath ſent out the Wild-Aſs free? Or who hath looſed the Bands of the Wild-Aſs? Gaveſt thou Wings and Feathers unto the Oſtrich? What time ſhe lifteth up her ſelf on high, ſhe ſcorneth the Horſe and his Rider. Doth the Hawk fly by thy Wiſdom? Doth the Eagle mount up at thy Command, and make her Neſt on high?*

The Concluſion hence to be made.

§. 45. From all this we may learn, that God made not the Earth to be deſolate; but has allotted its Deſerts and Wilderneſſes to be inhabited by Birds and Wild-Beaſts, that his *Bounty* to Man, and his *Magnificence* might be made known by the Multitude of his Creatures; his *Omnipotence,* by his Works; and his *Wiſdom,* by that infinite variety of diſtinct Virtues and Properties which He has beſtowed upon the Creatures, *Pſal.* l. 10, &c. *All the Beaſts of the Foreſt are mine, and ſo are the Cattle upon a thouſand Hills. I know all the Fowls of the Air, and the Beaſts of the Field are in my Sight. If I*

be

be hungry I will not tell thee; for the Earth is mine, and the Fulneſs thereof: Thinkeſt thou that I will eat Bulls Fleſh, or drink the Blood of Goats? But what then is the Sacrifice that God expects? *Offer unto God the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving, and pay thy Vows to the moſt high, and call upon me in the Time of Trouble, ſo will I hear thee, and thou ſhalt praiſe me.*

CHAP. IV.

Of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, the Work of the fourth Day.

GEN. i. 14.

Let there be Lights in the Firmament of Heaven, to divide the Day from the Night: And let them be for Signs, and for Seaſons, for Days, and Years.

Pſal. civ. 19. *He appointed the Moon for certain Seaſons, and the Sun knoweth his going down.*

Eccluſ. xliii. 5. *The Sun is a marvellous Work of the moſt High. Great is the Lord that made it, and at his Commandment it runneth haſtily.*

§. 1. THE Stars are bright Heavenly Bodies, endued with a celeſtial Eſſence, fixed in the Firmament of Heaven by the Word of the moſt High, to enlighten the Earth, to diſtinguiſh the Night from the Day, to adorn the Heavens. To be Signs and Tokens of Nature, of Judgment, of Mercy, of Seaſons, Days, and Years, 1 *Cor.* xv. 41. *Gen.* i. 14. *Eccluſ.* xliii. 2. *Why the Stars were created.*

§. 2. Lift up your Eyes on high, (ſaith God, *Iſa.* xl. 26.) and behold who hath created theſe Things: that bringeth out their Hoſt by Number, He calleth them all by their Names? We ought therefore, according to his Command, to contemplate theſe illuſtrious Works of his Hands, and learn from thence to admire and adore the Power and Wiſdom of Him that made them. For *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy-work*, Pſal. xix. 1.

Their Magnitude.

§. 3. In the Stars there are three Things chiefly worthy of our Admiration; their *Magnitude*, their *Courſes*, and their *Operations*. Concerning the Magnitude of the Sun and Moon, thus ſpeaketh St. *Baſil* in his ſixth Homily upon the Work of the ſix Days: *I reckon* (ſaith he) *that the Sun and Moon are ſtiled by* Moſes *great Lights, not only becauſe they exceed the leſſer Stars in Quantity; but becauſe they are ſo vaſtly large, that they can enlighten not only the whole Heaven, but even the Earth and Seas with their Light. And as they have always an equal Magnitude both in their Riſing and Setting, it follows, that they muſt be incredibly large; becauſe the great Extent of the Earth does no where hinder them from appearing of an equal bigneſs.* Thus St. *Baſil*.

§. 4. I doubt not, but if a Man were to ſee a Globe of Fire as big as a vaſt Mountain, or a large City, all in Flames, moving to and fro in the Air, he would look upon it with Aſtoniſhment and Horror. Now it is demonſtrable, that the Globe of the Sun is an Hundred Sixty ſix times greater than the Earth; from whence we may conjecture, how great and unconceivable a Space in the Heavens the Sun muſt take up, not only by its Dimenſions, but by its Revolution. Yea, the leaſt of the Stars in the eighth Sphere or Firmament of Heaven, are ſe-

veral hundred *German* Miles in Compaſs, and are greater than the Earth. And yet in the Firmament there are many Millions of theſe Stars, which by reaſon of their vaſt diſtance cannot be diſcerned by us. From whence it is plain, that the Heavens are infinitely larger than the Earth. Moreover, as each *Planet* has its particular Vortex and Circle in which it moves, and all move in a regular Subordination to each other; we may from thence gather, that the Planets themſelves, and their Spheres or Circles, are alſo much larger than the Earth.

§. 5. And here Humane Reaſon is at a ſtand, no created Mind can reach the Heighth and Dimenſions of Heaven. Hence it is, that the holy Scripture, ſpeaking of God's infinite Compaſſion, compares it to the greatneſs of Heaven. So *Pſal.* ciii. 11. *Look how high the Heaven is in compariſon of the Earth, ſo great is his Mercy alſo toward them that fear him. Look how wide the Eaſt alſo is from the Weſt, ſo far has he ſet our Sins from us.* For though *the Earth be full of the Goodneſs of the Lord,* Pſal. xxxiii. 5. yet is the Compaſs of it too ſmall to be compared with the infinite Goodneſs of God. For this Cauſe, the Holy Spirit bids us look up to the Heighth of Heaven, furniſhed with innumerable glorious Bodies, all full of the Goodneſs of God, and vaſtly larger than this lower World. For by the way, theſe Stars contain in them greater Treaſures of divine Goodneſs than the Earth it ſelf; of which the thouſandth Part cannot be deſcribed. But of this, more hereafter.

§. 6. Moreover, the incomprehenſible Greatneſs of the divine Power is manifeſted, not only in the *Bulk and Size* of the heavenly Bodies; but alſo in their *conſtant and immutable Courſes*; for who can obſerve without wonder and admi- *Their Courſes.*

ration,

ration, ſuch prodigious Bodies, not only hanging in the Air, but moving up and down in it with conſtant regularity? And how great and incomprehenſible a Space muſt each of them have to perform their Courſes in, and theſe ſo determined and ſettled, that they never exceed their appointed Limits, nor interfere with each other in their Revolutions? So that *David* truly pronounces, *Pſal.* cxxxvi. 5. that *God by his excellent Wiſdom made the Heavens.* How excellent, how tranſcendently excellent muſt that Wiſdom be, that can guide and govern the infinite Hoſt of Heaven in ſuch admirable Order, and call them all by their Names? This is a great, yea, a very great Myſtery, which perhaps is hinted at, *Rev.* viii. 10, 11. where it is ſaid, that *a Star fell from Heaven, whoſe Name was Wormwood.*

Their Self-motion.

§. 7. Wonderful is it alſo, that theſe vaſt lucid Bodies ſhould have a vital Motion *in themſelves*, that they cannot naturally, for one Moment, ſtand ſtill or reſt from their Courſes; for if they ſhould, the whole Heavenly Order would be diſturbed, and the Stars themſelves would, together with their Motion, loſe their vital Power, as Men die, when the Motion of their Lungs fails them. So then, the leaſt Star never ſtands ſtill, but is perpetually in quick and inconceivable Motion. For the *Sun*, tho' above 100 times (at leaſt) bigger than the Earth, yet it performs a diurnal Revolution from Eaſt to Weſt, moving, according to the niceſt Calculation, after the rate of 225 *German* Miles an Hour. And how ſmall a matter this is in reſpect of the Heavens, through which it performs its Courſe, is very eaſily conceived.

The Sun.

§. 8. Now if the Motion of the *Sun* only be ſo ſtupendious, what ſhall we ſay of that innumerable multitude of Stars, each of which have

have their particular Courſe and Revolution? And if any Man could but for a quarter of an Hour take a view of all their diſtinct Motions, he would be able to tell us very ſurprizing things, and witneſs to us that the whole Heaven is actuated by a vital Spirit or Principle.

The inviſible Stars of God, the Angels.

§. 9. And the Conſideration of the *Motions* and *Multitude* of theſe Stars, may put us in Mind of thoſe bright and inviſible Stars, the *Angels* of God. This ſeems to be hinted in the *Revelations* of St. *John*, where the Son of God appears *with ſeven Stars in his Hand*, Rev. i. 6. which are nothing elſe but the ſeven Spirits or Angels ſent forth into all the Earth. Under which figurative Repreſentation we have ſome myſterious Notices of the true and ſupernatural Aſtrology. To this *Job* alludes, Chap. xxxviii. 7. *When the Morning Stars ſang together, and the Sons of God ſhouted for Joy.* By which words, the holy Writer leads us from the natural Stars to the ſupernatural, even the holy Angels. For if God has created ſo great a multitude of Stars, who can doubt but that He has a much greater Multitude of celeſtial Spirits, who praiſe Him without ceaſing? *Praiſe him Sun and Moon, praiſe him all ye Stars and Light*, Pſal. cxlviii. 3.

The Benefit and Advantage to us from the Heavenly Bodies.

§. 10. But the Benefits and Advantages which the moſt wiſe God beſtows on us by theſe Motions of the Sun and Moon, and what uſe we may make of them by way of ſpiritual Application, I take notice toward the End, after I have ſpoken briefly of the Magnitude, Courſes, and Operations of the heavenly Bodies. And (1.) as to their *Operation*: We muſt know, that they are as it were the Treaſuries of Almighty God, from whence he wonderfully diſpenſes many great and wonderful Bleſſings both to Man and Beaſt. And here I think it will

will not be improper to produce the Opinion of that celebrated *German* Philoſopher, *Philip Paracelſus*, in his Book of Aſtronomy, with deference to the Judgment of every Chriſtian Reader. His Opinion is this. 'That all the natural Art, Skill or Cunning that a Man has in this World, is derived from the Stars, or that Aſtral Spirit that actuates them. Hence, ſaith he, ariſe all the famous Inventers and Improvers of uſeful Arts and Sciences, tending to the Glory of God, and Benefit of Mankind. For therefore has God hidden theſe ſecret natural Powers in the Heavens, that in his due time He may diſcover them to whom, when, and how He pleaſeth.

Their Operations and Impreſſions.

§. 11. 'And by theſe Means, by theſe wonderful Operations and Impreſſions, the *Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy Work*, Pſal. xix. 1. which, ſays he, is done not only by the greatneſs and vaſt compaſs of Heaven, and the certain and regular Courſe of the Stars; but more particularly by their *Operations*. Hence aroſe all the famous Artiſts; not that they were really Inventers; but only Veſſels or Inſtruments through which the heavenly Bodies convey their natural Powers impreſſed upon them, and implanted in them by God, and by the Stars they are brought into Light, as the Trees produce their particular Fruits in their proper Seaſon. Therefore the true Aſtronomer, who has ſpent his Time more in conſidering the Nature of the Stars, than in Arithmetical Calculations, eaſily knows the proper Seaſon of every Star, as well as of the Plants and Flowers in his own Garden. And in this Senſe, *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his Handy-work.*

§. 12.

§. 12. 'They then are much in the wrong, 'who aſcribe the Inventions of Arts to Men, 'whereas they are no more than Organs or *In-ſtruments* of Conveyance: Neither indeed is 'the Glory of thoſe Inventions due even to the 'heavenly Worlds themſelves, they being no-'thing but a great Store-houſe or Treaſury in 'which the Maſter of the Houſe lays up his 'Goods, for the Uſe of thoſe Children that 'ſhall beſt deſerve them. And in this manner, 'every good and every perfect Gift cometh '*mediately from above* from the Father of Lights, 'as St. *James* ſaith, Chap. i. 17. and *Ecclus.* 'i. 1. All Wiſdom cometh from the Lord, 'and was with Him for ever. Who after-'wards communicates it to Men, either medi-'ately by natural Means, or immediately by 'ſupernatural.

§. 13. Hence then deſcendeth all natural 'Wiſdom, Wit, and Cunning; ſuch as Philo-'ſophy, Politicks, and Phyſick. Hence ariſe 'the famous Poets, ſweet Muſicians, prudent 'Orators, and cunning Artificers in Wood, 'Metals, or Stones. Hence come the Sage Ma-'giſtrate, and the daring Soldier, and all Kinds 'of natural Qualities and Endowments. But as 'for thoſe whom God ſupernaturally furniſhed 'with Wiſdom from above, ſuch as thoſe Ar-'tiſts, Judges, and Kings, that we read of in the 'old Teſtament, theſe, I ſay, come under ano-'ther Conſideration. How do we obſerve ſome 'Men drawn as it were by a particular inſtinct 'and propenſity of Nature, to ſuch a particular 'Study, which they proſecute with the moſt in-'defatigable Induſtry. For as the Body of 'Man cannot ſubſiſt but by thoſe Elements out 'of which it is compoſed; ſo alſo the Senſes, 'Paſſions, and Reaſon of a Man, take their firſt 'Motion and Byaſs from that Aſtral Spirit

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'that presided in their Composition, and 'from thence they draw continual Supplies 'of natural Light and Knowledge, and may 'properly be said to draw nourishment for 'their Minds from thence, as to receive it from 'the Earth for their Bodies.

§. 14. 'But if to this Light of Nature, the 'Divine Light be added by *the Holy Spirit* in 'the regenerate Soul, then are those natural 'Gifts exalted to an higher degree of Perfecti-'on; by this the Possessors of them become De-'nizons of the new Heaven, from whence they 'receive a more sublime and excellent Degree 'and Kind of Light. So that they who are 'born of God, are enlightened and instructed 'by Him; their *Stars* are the blessed *Angels*, 'as it is expressed in the *Revelations*: They are 'exalted above the Influences of the natural 'Heavens; and the Works that are wrought in 'them, are not the Influences of the Stars, but 'the Operations of God. Such were the holy Pa-'triarchs and Prophets of old, *Joseph*, *Solomon*, 'and *Daniel*, of whom it is recorded, that they 'exceeded the *Egyptian* and *Persian* Magi, and 'all the Wise-Men of the *East*; for theirs 'was no more than a mere *natural* Knowledge 'derived from the natural Heavens, besides 'which, *Moses*, *Joseph*, *Daniel*, *David*, and *Solo-'mon*, had also the *supernatural* Gifts, descend-'ing from God the Father of Lights, and Foun-'tain of Wisdom. So the Apostles were en-'dued with the Holy Ghost, with Light and 'Power from on High; being not sent to 'teach the Sciences or Wisdom of this World, 'or as Professors of Philosophy, to read Lec-'tures upon the Virtues and Powers of the na-'tural Heavens, but to preach the heavenly and 'eternal Wisdom of God, *which none of the 'Princes of this World knew*, 1 Cor. ii. 8.

§. 15.

§. 15. This is the Opinion of the above-named Philoſopher, of which every Man muſt be judge for himſelf. But though we do not juſtifie the idle Pretenders to Aſtrological Predictions, as *preciſely limited and confined to individuals*; yet there are ſome Parts of this Science that deſerve a particular Conſideration. The *Firſt* is, *the Order and Revolution of Times and Seaſons.* The *Second*, *The Signs of Heaven, both natural and ſupernatural.* The *Third*, *The Operations of Heaven.* To each of which I ſhall ſpeak briefly. *Firſt* then we muſt conſider, that the Revolution of the Heavens is, by the All-wiſe Creator, appointed as the Meaſure of *Time*; in which does appear the ſtupendious Providence, Oeconomy, and Wiſdom of God; eſpecially, if we carefully conſider the amazing Harmony that is between the Writings of the Prophets, and the Hiſtories and Nature of Things.

§. 16. To this Head we are to refer, *the Ages of the World, and their diſtinct Epocha's, the Ending of Monarchies, the ſeventy Years of the Babyloniſh Captivity, Daniel's ſeventy Weeks, the Periods of Kingdoms, and the Times of Antichriſt, both in Daniel and the Revelations*, with other things of the ſame Nature, which wonderfully confirm and illuſtrate the Providence and Wiſdom of God. And whereas our Saviour tells us, *Act.* i. 7. *That it is not for us to know the Times and the Seaſons which the Father hath put in his own Power*; that is to be underſtood of ſuch a Knowledge only as was foreign to the Duty of an Apoſtle, not ſerving either to the Edification of the Church, or the Propagation of the Goſpel. The Words alſo may bear another Senſe: *viz.* that no Time or Place ought to be preſcribed to our bleſſed Lord for the Erecting and Eſtabliſhing of his Kingdom; of which He

Grand Periods and Revolutions.

He himſelf is the only proper Judge. Our buſineſs is only to be Witneſſes of his Kingdom, and do our beſt to promote it, leaving *the Times and Seaſons* to God alone. Moreover, the Diſciples at that Time, had ſuch wrong Notions of the Nature and Deſign of his Kingdom, that thoſe Words may be only looked upon as a proper Rebuke of their erroneous Opinions about it.

Of Times and Seaſons. §. 17. And as for *the Times and Seaſons* of our worldly Affairs, even thoſe are under the Diſpoſal and Direction of God, whenſoever we devoutly offer up our Concerns to Him, begging his Direction and Aſſiſtance, as plainly appears in the Story of *Abraham*'s Servant, who prayed to God, *that He would ſend him good ſpeed that Day*, Gen. xxiv. 12.

Signs of the Times. §. 18. *Secondly*, We muſt know, that the natural Heavens have certain *fore-running Tokens*, which they naturally diſcover before they operate at all. Thus our bleſſed Saviour argues with the *Jews* from thoſe very Tokens in the Heavens which the common Experience of thoſe Times had remarked, *Matt.* xvi. 2. and *Luk.* xii. 54. thereby leading them to Obſervations of an higher Nature, and put them in Mind of thoſe Prognoſticks which were to uſher in and attend the Appearance of the *Meſſiah*. The Words in St. *Matthew* are theſe: *In the Evening ye ſay it will be fair Weather; for the Sky is red. And in the Morning, it will be foul Weather to day, for the Sky is red and louring. Ye Hypocrites, ye can diſcern the Face of the Sky, but can ye not diſcern the Signs of the Times?* So that our Saviour's concluſion runs thus: If ye attend to the *natural* Signs, and by the Face of the Sky can judge rightly of the Weather, why do ye not attend to the Signs of the preſent Time, and conclud that the Times of the *Meſſiah* are come?

§. 19.

§. 19. The Words in St. *Luke* run thus: *When ye ſee a Cloud riſe out of the Weſt, ſtraightway ye ſay there cometh a Shower, and ſo it is: And when ye ſee the South-wind blow, ye ſay there will be Heat, and it cometh to paſs. Ye Hypocrites, ye can diſcern the Face of the Sky and of the Earth, but how is it that ye do not diſcern this Time?* So that our Lord concludes thus: As by the natural Signs of Heaven, ye judge rightly of the Weather, becauſe ye ſee the Effect follow; ſo by the Signs and Miracles which ye ſee, ye ought to be convinced, that the *Meſſiah* is really come. But Hypocrites as ye are! ye retain the one, and neglect the other, though of the laſt Importance to you. Which however ſhews that our Lord did not diſapprove of thoſe natural Obſervations upon the Signs of Heaven.

Premonitory Signs.

§. 20. We come next to thoſe Signs which are generally looked upon as *Premonitory* of ſome ſignal Event to follow. Here we muſt conſider, that God does not puniſh of a ſudden, but does firſt warn us by Signs and Prodigies of the approaching Evils. Which are not to be ſlighted, though at the ſame Time, not to be feared by the pious Chriſtian, as God tells us, *Jer.* x. 2. Such a one may aſſure himſelf, that whatever happens, *He is ſafe under the Protection and Defence of the moſt high*, Pſal. xci. 1.

Supernatural Operations of theſe Heavenly Bodies.

§. 21. *Thirdly*, As to the *Operations* of Heaven, we muſt obſerve *firſt* of all, of the Supernatural, that the Heavens do nothing of themſelves, nor have any thing in their own Nature malignant or hurtful to Mankind, as ſome ignorant Pretenders would perſuade us; but that our Sins and Wickedneſs are the true Cauſe why *God arms the Creatures unto vengeance*, Wiſ. v. 18. and makes uſe of them to puniſh a rebellious World. Thus He puniſhed the Sins of

the old World by a Rain of Forty Days, which cauſed *the Flood*, Gen. vii. 2. And thus the Sin of *Sodom* drew down *Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven*, Gen. xix. 24.

Inſtruments of Divine Vengeance.

§. 22. In the ſame manner we are puniſhed even at this Day; ſometimes by exceſſive Heats, at other times by violent Cold, Rains, or Drought; at other times by Thunders, Hail, Fire, Inſects, or contagious Air, which are very often as much ſupernatural, as the Fire that deſtroyed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* from Heaven. But as the *Egyptian* Plagues had no power over the Children of *Iſrael*, (Exod. viii. 22.) ſo theſe epidemical Puniſhments do never hurt the Children of God, if they live in his Faith and Fear. Thus it is ſaid, *Pſal.* cxxi. 5, 6. *The Lord is thy Defence upon thy right Hand, ſo that the Sun ſhall not burn thee by Day; neither the Moon by Night.* Which is not to be underſtood of the natural Heat of the Sun and Moon, but of thoſe ſupernatural Puniſhments which God ſends upon us, by the Means of the heavenly Bodies, which He uſes as the Rods of his Anger upon a rebellious World. To avoid which, the ſame Pſalm adviſes us, *to lift up our Eyes to the Hills, from whence cometh our Help*, that by the Grace and Favour of God we may eſcape them. And in this Senſe ſome explain that Paſſage, *Rev.* xvi. 1. where we are told, *of the Angels pouring out the Vials full of the laſt Plagues upon the Earth.*

Means of Protection to the Righteous.

§. 23. And as God makes uſe of the Heavens and heavenly Bodies, as inſtruments of Vengeance againſt the Wicked; ſo He employs them ſometimes as Means of Protection and Bleſſing to the Righteous. Thus we read, *Judg.* v. 20. *They fought from Heaven, the Stars in their Courſes fought againſt Siſera*; not unlike to which, is the Story of the Emperor *Theodoſius,*

ſius, whoſe Enemies were routed by the Riſing of a ſudden Tempeſt of Wind and Rain; upon which the Poet complements him:

O nimium dilecte Deo, cui militat æther,
Et conjurati veniunt ad claſſica venti.

Fav'rite of God, for thee the Hoſt of Heaven
Fight in their Courſe, the Winds at thy alarms
Attend thy Conqueſts, and aſſiſt thy Arms.

§. 24. As to the *natural* Operations of Heaven, we muſt know, that the Firmament of the greater World does daily ſupply ſomething or other for the Bodily Neceſſities of Mankind. And here I muſt admoniſh the Chriſtian Reader, not to be deceived by the Authority of Heathen Writers and their Diſciples, but to ſatisfie himſelf, that all *the Meteors* which I am about to mention, are the proper and genuine *Product of the Stars.* *Natural Operations of the Heavens.*

§. 25. Such are, *Firſt of all, the Clouds*; of this the Son of *Sirach* ſpeaketh, Chap. xliii. 14. *Through this the Treaſures are opened, and Clouds fly forth as Fowls. By His great Power he maketh the Clouds firm.* (2.) *The Miſts* and little Clouds which the Stars draw out of the Earth, *Jer.* x. 13. *When he uttereth his Voice, there is a multitude of Waters in the Heavens; and he cauſeth the Vapours to aſcend from the Ends of the Earth.* Pſal. cxlviii. 8. *Who covereth the Heavens with Clouds.* Job xxvi. 9. *He holdeth back the Face of his Throne, and ſpreadeth his Cloud upon it.* (3.) In its due Seaſon they bring *the Snow*, Ecclus. xliii. 13. *By his Commandment he maketh the Snow to fall apace.* Job xxxvii. 6. Pſal. cxlviii. 8. *He ſaith to the Snow, Be thou on the Earth, likewiſe to the ſmall Rain, and to the great Rain of his Strength.* *Generation of Meteors.* 1. Clouds. 2. Miſts. 3. Snow.

4. Froſt.

§. 26. Alſo (4.) *The Cold.* Job xxxvii. 9, 10. *Out of the South cometh the Whirl-wind, and Cold out of the North.* (5.) *Ice.* Job xxxviii. 29. *Out of whoſe Womb came the Ice? And the hoary Froſt of Heaven, who hath gendred it?* At another time, (6.) *Hail and Snow,* Job xxxviii. 22, 23. *Haſt thou entred into the Treaſures of the Snow, or haſt thou ſeen the Treaſures of the Hail; which I have reſerved againſt the time of Trouble, againſt the Day of Battle and War?* By which we may learn, that God employs his Creatures as the Executioners of his Vengeance upon the Wicked, *Wiſd.* v. 17. *God ſhall make the Creature his Weapon for the Revenge of his Enemies.* Chap. xvi. 24. *For the Creature that ſerveth thee, who art the Maker, encreaſeth his Strength againſt the Unrighteous for their Puniſhment, and abateth their Strength for the Benefit of ſuch as put their truſt in thee.* Chap. v. 21, 22. *Then ſhall the right-aiming Thunderbolts go abroad, and from the Clouds, as from a well-drawn Bow, ſhall they fly to the Mark. And Hail-ſtones full of Wrath ſhall be caſt as out of a Stone-Bow.* Ezek. xxxviii. 22. *I will Rain upon Gog and Magog, Fire and Brimſtone*; ſomething like what we read, *Exod.* ix. 23. *Joſhua* x. 11.

5. Ice.

6. Hail.

§. 17. Other productions of the Stars are (7.) *Flames of Fire, Heat, Thunder, and Lightening.* Job xxxviii. 34, 35. *Canſt thou ſend Lightenings that they may go, and ſay unto thee, Here we are?* Pſal. xcvii. 3, 4. *There ſhall go a Fire before him, and burn up his Enemies on every ſide. His Lightenings gave ſhine unto the World, the Earth ſaw it, and was afraid. The Hills melted like Wax at the Preſence of the Lord, at the Preſence of the Lord of the whole Earth.* Eccluſ. xliii. 4. *The Sun burneth the Mountains three times more, breathing out fiery Vapours*; that is, the

7. *Fiery* Exhalations.

the Sun is that univerſal Fire that ripeneth, concocteth, and warmeth all things.

§. 28. To theſe are added, (8.) The *Rains.* Without which the Earth would be barren and unfruitful. *Deut.* xxviii. 12. *The Lord ſhall open unto thee his good Treaſure, the Heaven to give the Rain unto thy Land in his Seaſon.* By which we are taught, God has the Key of the Rain, and that He ſends it in his Seaſon, at the Requeſt of his Servants. *Pſal.* cxlvii. 8. *Jer.* xiv. 22. *Are there any among the Vanities of the Gentiles that can cauſe Rain? Or can the Heavens give Showers?* Prov. iii. 20. *By his Knowledge the Depths are broken up, and the Clouds drop down the Dew.* Job xxxviii. 28. *Hath the Rain a Father, or who hath begotten the Drops of Dew?* Lev. xxvi. 4. *If ye walk in my Statutes, then I will give you Rain in due Seaſon, and the Land ſhall yield her encreaſe, and the Trees of the Field ſhall yield their Fruit.* Jer. v. 24. *Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth Rain, both the former and the latter in his Seaſon, he reſerveth unto us the appointed Weeks of the Harveſt.* Mal. iii. 10. *I will open the Windows of Heaven, and pour you out a Bleſſing that there ſhall not be room enough to receive it.* Job xxxviii. 37. *Who can ſtay the Bottles of Heaven?* 8. *The* Rain

§. 29. The next in order (9.) is, the *Rain-Bow.* Ecclus. xliii. 11, 12. *Look upon the Rain-bow, and praiſe him that made it. Very beautiful it is in the brightneſs thereof, it compaſſeth the Heaven about with a glorious Circle, and the Hand of the moſt High hath bended it.* In a Word, the *Rainbow* is the Witneſs of God in the Clouds, a Token of divine Favour, a Memorial of God's Covenant with Mankind, and with all the Creatures, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 38. *Gen.* ix. 13. *And there was a Rainbow round about the Throne, in ſight like unto an Emerald,* Rev. iv. 3. 9. *The* Rain-bow.

10. *The* Dew. §. 30. The next is (10.) The *Dew*. This is that which refreſhes the Graſs and Corn, *aſſwages the Heat*, Ecclus. xviii. 16. produces Flowers and Herbs. Thus God ſpeaketh by the Prophet *Hoſea*, Chap. xiv. 5. *I will be as the Dew unto Iſrael, he ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt forth his Fruits.* And the want of it is reckoned as a Puniſhment from God, *Hag.* i. 10. *Joel* i. 17. *Therefore the Heaven over you is ſtaid from Dews, and the Earth is ſtaid from her Fruit.* Juſt as the *Mildew* is reckoned amongſt the malignant Effects of the ſame Stars, *Hag.* ii. 17. *I ſmote you with Blaſting and Mildew, and with Hail, in all the Labours of your Hands.* Something like what is threatned, *Deut.* xxviii. 16. *Amos* iv. 19.

11. *The* Winds. §. 31. To the ſame Cauſe alſo are to be aſcribed *the Winds*. Of which *Job* ſpeaketh, Chap. xxviii. 25. *He maketh a Weight for the Winds, and weigheth the Waters by meaſure.* And *Pſal.* cxxxv. 7. *He bringeth the Winds out of his Treaſures.* And over theſe Treaſures of Wind, placed at the four Quarters of the World, He hath appointed particular Treaſurers, who, in Obedience to his Command, either keep them in, or let them out, as He has done by all the other Treaſures of Heaven, and the Aſtral Worlds. Upon this Foundation it is, that the Prophet *Zechariah*, Chap. vi. 5. ſpeaks comparatively of the *four Chariots*, which the Angel interprets of the *four Cardinal Winds*, which the Prophet underſtands in a ſpiritual and myſtical Senſe. Thus, *Rev.* vii. 1. we read that St. *John ſaw four Angels ſtanding on the four Corners of the Earth, holding the four Winds of the Earth, that the Wind ſhould not blow on the Earth, nor on the Sea, nor on any Tree.* Which is a Similitude taken from the Sea, to expreſs and illuſtrate a prophetical Prediction; to which may

may be added, the Words of our bleſſed Lord, *Matt.* xxiv. 31. *Mark* xiii. 27. that in the laſt Day, *God ſhall ſend his Angels, and they ſhall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.*

§. 32. *Laſtly,* The very Names of the four Cardinal Winds carry in them certain divine Marks and Signatures. By the *Eaſt Wind,* which is hot and dry, God dried up the Red-Sea, *Exod.* xiv. 21. Of this alſo ſpeaks the Prophet *Hoſea,* Chap. xviii. 15. *An Eaſt-Wind ſhall come, the Wind of the Lord ſhall come up from the Wilderneſs, and his Spring ſhall become dry, and his Fountain ſhall be dried up.* The *South Wind* is hot and moiſt; of this *Job* ſpeaks, Chap. xxxvii. 17. *Are not thy Garments warm about thee, when he quieteth the Earth with the South Wind?* And Chriſt himſelf, *Luk.* xii. 55. *When ye ſee the South Wind blow, ye ſay there will be heat, and it cometh to paſs.* The *Weſt Wind* is moiſt and cold; of this *Moſes* ſpeaketh, *Exod.* x. 19. *And the Lord turned a mighty ſtrong Weſt Wind, which took away the Locuſts, and caſt them into the Red-Sea.* The laſt is the North Wind, which is cold and dry. Of this ſpeaketh the Son of *Sirach,* Ecclus. xliii. 20. *The Cold North Wind bloweth, and the Water is congealed into Ice.*

The various Productions of Heaven conſidered.

§. 33. Thus much of *the Products of Heaven,* which God in his due Time diſpenſes out of his Treaſures, for the Benefit and Advantage of this lower World; God ſo diſpoſing and ordering the Creatures, that the inferior Creatures receive the Influences of the ſuperior, and all Nature hangs together as it were in one Chain. And this connexion of Nature and Providence is finely deſcribed by the Prophet *Hoſea,* Chap. ii. 21, 22. *It ſhall come to paſs in that Day, ſaith the Lord, I will hear the Heavens,*

and they ſhall hear the Earth, and the Earth ſhall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they ſhall hear Jezreel. In this Place the Prophet preſents us with the entire Order of Nature, beginning at the firſt Cauſe, which is God. *I* (ſaith He) *will hear the Heavens*; i. e. when in the great Drought, the Heaven ſhall ſcorch with exceſſive Heat, and the Channel of the Aſtral Influences ſhall as it were be dried up, ſo that they cannot convey fruitful Seaſons to the Earth: Then I will hear the Diſtreſs of the Heavens, I will cover them with Clouds, and make the Stars fruitful in their Seaſons.

§. 34. For when the Sun and Moon are any ways irregular in their Productions, of Neceſſity the Earth muſt be ſo too. And whereas the Prophet adds, *the Heavens ſhall hear the Earth*, that has relation to the ſecondary Cauſes. For as the inferior Parts of the great World, or Earth, depend on the ſuperior, or Heavens, it follows, that when the Operations of the Heavens are hindred, or are malignant, the Earth can produce nothing that is good. And when the Earth is broken or chapped by exceſſive Heat, it does as it were open its Mouth and intreat for Rain. *Aud the Earth ſhall hear the Corn, and Wine, and Oil*; that is, foraſmuch as the Vegetables depend upon the Earth for their radical Juice and Moiſture; therefore whenſoever the Earth is dry, and cannot ſupply them with Nouriſhment, the Vegetables beg Moiſture of it, as a thirſty Infant would from its Mother.

The Benefits hence ariſing.

§. 35. I proceed next to the *Benefits* which God beſtows upon us by the Light of the *Sun and Moon*. And theſe we muſt conſider in the Fear of God, and ſhow how we may enjoy and uſe them, both in a natural and ſpiritual Senſe. *Tell me* (ſaith God to *Job*, Chap. xxxviii. 19, 31, &c.) *where is the Way where Light dwelleth; and*

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as for Darkneſs, where is the Place thereof? Canſt thou bind the ſweet Influences of Pleiades, or looſe the Bands of Orion? Canſt thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his Seaſon, or canſt thou guide Arcturus with his Sons? Knoweſt thou the Ordinances of Heaven? Canſt thou ſet the Dominion thereof in the Earth? Canſt thou lift up thy Voice to the Clouds, that abundance of Waters may cover thee? In which Words God repreſents to us his infinite Power and Wiſdom, ſuch as no mortal can ſearch out or account for, much leſs imitate. For ſo unable is the wiſeſt Man to form Light or Darkneſs, that he cannot ſo much as produce a blade of Graſs. *Not unto us* then, *O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be the Praiſe*: For Thou haſt made all theſe Things, and thy Hand hath formed them. *Thou haſt appointed the Moon for Seaſons, and the Sun knoweth his going down,* Pſal. civ. 19. alluding to the Work of the fourth Day, *Gen.* i. 14, 16. When God ſaid, *Let there be Lights in the Firmament of Heaven, to divide the Day from the Night*: *And let them be for Signs, and for Seaſons, and for Days, and for Years. And God made two great Lights, the greater Light to rule the Day, and the leſſer Light to rule the Night, he made the Stars alſo.*

§. 36. And firſt, as for the *Moon*, how wonderful is its increaſe and decreaſe, ſometimes it ſeems to be ſhut up in Darkneſs, and again in its Seaſon to emerge by degrees into a fulneſs of Light. And theſe varieties hath God appointed for a regular diſtinction of the Times and Seaſons of the Year, and of the Affairs and Buſineſs of Mankind. Without this, there could be no order in the Church of God, or in Civil Governments, or in the Oeconomy of private Families. But all would be mere Darkneſs, Diſorder, and Confuſion. *By the* Moon.

§. 37.

§. 37. And how abundantly is the Wiſdom of God diſplayed, even in this certain Courſe of the Moon, and diſtinction of Seaſons? In all States and Conditions, the chief Part of Prudence is, to keep a good Order, and to obſerve the proper Opportunities of Acting; theſe are the diſtinguiſhing Accompliſhments of a good Politician, and a good Oeconomiſt. This indeed is the Principal thing to be regarded in every Action, he that acts unſeaſonably, acts to little or no purpoſe. So that *God himſelf hath ordered all Things in Meaſure, and Number, and Weight,* Wiſd. xi. 20. And every Seaſon hath its proper Opportunities and Bleſſings attending it. *To every thing there is a Seaſon, and a Time to every purpoſe under the Heaven,* Eccl. iii. 1. And as the hitting the proper Seaſon is truly an Happineſs, ſo it is alſo a Bleſſing of God, of whom therefore we ought to ask it by Prayer.

§. 38. Another Reaſon why God has made the *Moon* ſo changeable a Planet is, becauſe its viciſſitudes have particular Influences upon this lower World. By this means we are ſupplied with ſomething new every Month: Thus every one of the ſix Months, *March, May, June, July, Auguſt,* and *September,* bring ſome new Vegetables, Fleſh, Fiſh, Fruits, or Weather in Seaſon. In a Word, ſo great is the Wiſdom of God, even in this reſpect, that no created Mind can comprehend it.

By the Sun. §. 39. Moreover, by theſe Words, *The Sun knoweth his going down,* Pſal. civ. 19. The Royal Prophet hints to us, the exceeding quick Motion of the Sun; by which the Seaſons of the Year, Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, and the Days are diſtinguiſhed, being ſome longer, and ſome ſhorter; all which are of very great Uſe to Mankind.

§. 40.

§. 40. And here, who can chuſe but admire the certain Courſe of the Sun; from which the Heathens themſelves gathered the neceſſary Being of a God, a perfect, intelligent Mind, which could govern it with ſuch exact regularity, as that it ſhould never break out of its proper Sphere, which they call *the Way of the Sun, the Ecliptick Line*, or ever deviate from the Path preſcribed to it by God. Thus it never paſſes *Southward* over the firſt Point of *Capricorn*; but having brought us to the very Point of Winter, it turns back again. So when it comes *Northward*, as far as the firſt Point of *Cancer*, and made our Summer, it immediately retires back again. And this Courſe it ſo regularly and nicely fulfils, that it never makes a ſingle Miſtake, even of a Moment. When the Sun has run thro' the *Zodiack*, it makes a *Solar Year*; and when the *Moon* has run through its Signs, it makes a *Lunar* one.

§. 41. But this is only the Annual Courſe of the Sun: For its *Diurnal* is performed with that exceeding quickneſs, that no Humane Mind can comprehend. For though the Earth be no more than a Point in compariſon with the Heavens; yet does it every Day run through the whole Circle of Heaven. Every Year it runs 360 Degrees, and every Degree contains 570581 *German* Miles; all which put together, make a Sum hardly to be counted.

§. 42. And now, who can conſider theſe amazing Acts of divine Power and Wiſdom, without Admiration and Praiſe to the Author of Nature? This aſtoniſhing Myſtery of Nature appeared ſo ſtupendious to the ancient Heathens, that they worſhipped even the *Sun* for their God, as being the greateſt and moſt beautiful of all Creatures, enlightening all the World, and directing by its Courſe and Influences the inferi-

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or Creation. And this was but a pardonable Concluſion for blind corrupt Reaſon to draw, tho' every part of the Creation, to pure and right Reaſon, does fully manifeſt and diſcover the Being and Excellencies of the Creator. Thus the Son of *Sirach* ſpeaks *of the Sun*, Ecclus. xliii. 2, 5. I have ſomewhere met with a Story of a certain *Indian King*, who having heard of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the neceſſity of Believing in Him, becauſe He died for us, gave this Anſwer: *For my part, I had rather believe in the Sun that never dies, than in a mortal God.* This was the Effect of Humane Blindneſs, againſt the corrupt Influences and Prejudices of which, God has taken particular Care to warn us, *Deut.* iv. 19. *Leſt thou lift up thine Eyes unto Heaven, and when thou ſeeſt the Sun, and the Moon, and the Stars, even all the Hoſt of Heaven, ſhouldeſt be driven to worſhip them, and ſerve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all Nations under the whole Heaven.*

The Magnitude of theſe Celeſtial Bodies.

§. 43. As to the Magnitude of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, it is ridiculous to imagine, that they are really no bigger than they appear to us. For tho' the Moon and ſome of the Stars are leſs than the Earth; yet the Sun may be plainly and infallibly demonſtrated to be 166 times bigger; and that it appears ſo ſmall to us, is owing to the *Swiftneſs of its Motion*, and *the Immenſity of its Diſtance*: Ocular Demonſtration convinces every Man of this, that the more remote any Object is, the leſſer it appears. A nice Diſquiſition of theſe Matters we muſt leave to Aſtronomers, and be content religiouſly to admire what we do not underſtand.

Various Reflexions upon theſe Obſervations.

§. 44. And here how ought we (1.) to magnifie and adore *the Omnipotence and Wiſdom* of God, who appointed the *Sun* to be the Light and Ornament of the Day, and the *Moon* of the

the Night. For Light is the higheſt Ornament and Beauty of all Things. If we highly admire a light well-built Houſe with a fair Proſpect, well furniſhed with good Statues and Pictures, and painted with great variety of Colours; how much more ought we to look up with gratitude and aſtoniſhment upon that noble Palace of Heaven, adorned with ſo many, and ſo ſtupendious Lights? For as I ſaid before, *Light* is the higheſt Ornament of all Creatures.

§. 45. (2.) How profound is the *Wiſdom* of God, *who telleth the Number of the Stars, and calleth them all by their Names*, Pſal. cxlvii. 4, 5. to which is immediately ſubjoined, *Great is our Lord, and great is his Power, yea, and his Wiſdom is infinite.* How ought we then to depend upon this Wiſdom, and be ſatisfied in all its Determinations concerning us, and not charge Him with Folly, by pretending to be wiſer than He. *For the Fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men*, 1 Cor. i. 15.

§. 46. The certain and regular Courſe of the Sun and Moon, puts us in Mind of the *Truth of God*, and the undoubted certainty of his Promiſes. Such as that of ſending the *Meſſiah*, of the Changes and Revolutions of certain States and Kingdoms, and other Deliverances of Mankind, all which appeared in their Time. *Thus ſaith the Lord* by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxxiii. 20, 25. *If my Covenant be not with Day and Night, and if I have not appointed the Ordinances of Heaven and Earth, that there ſhould not be Day nor Night in their Seaſon; Then may alſo my Covenant be broken with David my Servant.*

§. 47. *Eclipſes* of the Sun and Moon, are Tokens of *the Divine Wrath*, Prognoſticks of great Calamities and Revolutions in the World, and *Concerning Eclipſes.*

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are as it were a kind of penitential Sermons, preached by God to an impenitent World. For tho' the Eclipſes of both Sun and Moon, may be ſcribed to natural Cauſes, (whence ſome imagine, that thoſe which ſhall be forerunners of the laſt Judgment, like that in *Egypt*, and that at the Paſſion of our bleſſed Saviour, ſhall be ſupernatural;) yet I ſee no reaſon why thoſe natural ones may not be prognoſticks of the laſt Judgment. For as all Eclipſes are manifeſtly contrary to the Nature and Properties of thoſe noble Bodies, which were therefore created, that they might give Light to the Earth; it follows, that whenſoever their natural Operations are hindered, they are then in an unnatural State, and may be ſaid to Suffer, which the Heathens themſelves were not ignorant of; whence that of the Poet.

Defectus Solis, Lunæq; labores.

The Sufferings of the Sun, and Labours of the Moon.

And extraordinary Concuſſions.

§. 48. And whereas our bleſſed Lord ſays, *that the Powers of Heaven ſhall be ſhaken*, Matt. xxiv. 29. that properly relates *to the Stars*, which are the Powers of Heaven, and communicate their heavenly Strength and Energy to all the inferior Creation. They have a Power of running to and fro in the Heavens, but grow weak and languid when that Power fails them. Juſt ſo Man, tho' he be not tied by the Leg to any part of the Earth, yet is neceſſarily confined, if he wants Strength, to remove himſelf to another Place. Now the firſt and principal Cauſe of all the Evils portended or effected by Eclipſes, or other noxious Operations of the heavenly Bodies, is *MAN*. For the whole Creation groans

groans and travails together in Pain with him. And this ſuffering in the great World, is afterward perceived in the leſſer World, or Humane Nature. For all the Sufferings that happen to Man, fall firſt of all upon external Nature or the greater World. All the Effects and Operations of the Creatures, both good and bad, fall upon Man, as the chief Scope and Centre, to which all the Lines of external Nature are directed, and in whom they meet. So that for the Sins of Men, the Creatures ſuffer; and in proportion to our Sins, their Sufferings are increaſed; for which Cauſe, they are ſaid *to groan and travail*, Rom. viii. 22. And as Men grow every Day worſe and worſe, ſo is the Burden ſo much increaſed, that the World is ready to ſink under it. Our wickedneſſes mount up to the Heavens, and fall back upon our Heads in Drops of fiery Indignation. This was the meaning of *the Vials of divine Wrath*, which the Angels, *Rev.* xvi. 1, &c. poured out upon the Sea and Land, upon Man and Beaſt, and all Creatures.

§. 49. When the Light of the Sun is hindred, it is certain, that every Star, and other Creatures that derive their force and power from the Sun, muſt ſuffer likewiſe. Hence our bleſſed Saviour tells us, *Luk.* xxi. 25. *that there ſhall be Signs in the Stars*; i. e. they ſhall ſuffer, and fall from Heaven; for their Light is their Life, and when that fails them, they muſt neceſſarily fall, as a dying Man that faints away, and has not ſtrength to ſupport him. The Stars are Lights: And the natural Property of Light is, to mount upwards; and when their Light fails them, they languiſh, ſink, and die. So then when we ſee an Eclipſe, we ſhould conſider, that the Luminaries of Heaven languiſh and ſuffer Violence, ſignifying to us the Load of Sin

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that oppreſſes the Earth, and the Puniſhments that are ready to overtake us. Thus we are told, *Job* xx. 27. *The Heaven ſhall reveal his iniquity, and the Earth ſhall riſe up againſt him.*

§. 50. So at our bleſſed Saviour's Paſſion, the Darkneſs that overſpread the whole World, did as it were repreſent the Terrors of his Death, and all thoſe barbarous Impieties that were acted againſt Him, *Matt.* xxvii. 45. for *the Sun and Moon* are as it were the Mirrors of the great World, in which we may read the Sins and Iniquities of Mankind, which, like the Sin of *Sodom*, mount up to Heaven, and draw down Vengeance upon the World, *Gen.* xviii. 20. In ſhort, every Eclipſe of the Sun, points out to us that internal and ſpiritual Blindneſs of Heart, that reigns in every one of us, and that as plainly, as if a Voice from thence ſhould call to us, ſaying, *Look upon me, for you your ſelves are in the ſame Condition.* And when the Heaven is red as Blood, and ſeems to be as it were on Fire, it ſeems to ſpeak to us in Words like theſe: *Look up to me, and think on that Day when I ſhall burn with real Flames.* So in ſhort, we may conſider all the Elements in their way, as upbraiding us with our Iniquities, and warning us to repent. What is the *Thunder*, but the terrible Voice of Heaven, at which the Earth trembles, and by which God ſpeaks to the impenitent World? What is an *Earthquake*, but a Lecture of Repentance from that Element. The ſame may be ſaid of Storms and Tempeſts at Sea, and of all other irregular Motions and Diſorders in the inanimate Creation.

Natural and ſupernatural Light.

§. 51. The Sun, Moon, and Stars, are witneſſes of *the divine Goodneſs*, and of that eternal Light, that enlightens, comforts and refreſhes every Man that cometh into the World. For as God is in himſelf *inviſible* and incomprehenſible,

prehenſible, we ſhould, by the Direction of the natural Light, aſpire to the Knowledge of Him that made it; and by the Beauty of the created, be drawn to the Love of the uncreated Light. And as we naturally delight and take pleaſure in the outward Light, as the moſt Beautiful of all the Creatures; ſo ought we with our whole Hearts, to love Him who is Light Eternal, and to walk and rejoice in his Light, by withdrawing our ſelves from the Darkneſs of Sin. *For what Fellowſhip hath Righteouſneſs with Unrighteouſneſs? And what communion hath Light with Darkneſs? And what concord hath Chriſt with Belial?* 2 Cor. vi. 14.

§. 52. *Laſtly,* The viſible Sun ſhould put us in mind of *Jeſus Chriſt,* the ſpiritual and eternal *Sun of Righteouſneſs,* Mal. iv. 2. For as that ſhines equally upon all Men; ſo Chriſt freely beſtows himſelf and the Light of his Grace upon all that will receive Him. Thus He ſaith, *Joh.* viii. 12. *I am the Light of the World; he that followeth me ſhall not walk in Darkneſs, but ſhall have the Light of Life.* *The Natural and Supernatural Sun.*

CHAP. V.

Of the SEA and the WATERS, and their ſeveral Productions, being the Work of the fifth Day.

GEN. i. 20, 22.

God ſaid, Let the Waters bring forth abundantly the moving Creature that hath Life, and Fowl that may fly above the Earth, in the open Firmament of Heaven. And he bleſſed them, and ſaid, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the Waters in the Seas.

Pſal. civ. 25. *In the great and wide Sea are Things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great Beaſts.*

The Element of Water.

THE *Water* is a Liquid, Fluid, and moiſt Element, greater than the Earth or dry Land, ſeparated from the other Elements, Earth, Air, and Fire, enriched with *ſeminal Virtues*, productive of Plants, of Animals, containing in it the *firſt Matter* or Seed of Birds, Fiſhes, Stones, Jewels, Metals, Minerals, and Salts.

§. 2. In Treating of this Element, we ſhall *firſt of all*, (1.) ſpeak of its Place or Situation. (2.) Of its Productions. (3.) How it extends its Bracnhes and Fruits, of Rivers, Minerals, and Metals, like a great Tree of Water, ſpreading it ſelf through the whole Globe of the Earth.

Its Situation.

§. 3. *Firſt* then as for its *Place.* It poſſeſſes the Cavities of the Earth, and is ſo formed, that Man may live upon it, and travel over it, as well as upon dry Land. It ſo encompaſſes the Globe

Globe of the Earth, as never to ſlip out of its Place; and that part of it which is under the Earth, ſticks as cloſe to its Centre or Globe of the Earth, as that which is above. Yea, the very Cavity, which is the true Centre and Place of the watery Element, has no bottom, neither is ſupported by the Earth, but, like an Egg, holds it ſelf faſt together, without falling out of its Shell. Which is none of the ſmalleſt Miracles in Nature.

§. 4. Moreover, the Element of Water *produces* its Fruits in the Earth; juſt as the Fruits of the Earth have their Seeds and Roots in the Earth, in which however they do not continue, but are ſeparated and forced into the Air, in order to produce and ripen their Fruits. So, I ſay, the Fruits of the Water, *viz. Metals, Minerals, Salts, Jewels,* and *Stones,* ſpring from the Water into another Matrix; *i. e.* the *Earth,* in which they are finiſhed and perfected, tho', as I ſaid before, they have their Roots in the Water. *Its Productions.*

§. 5. We muſt not therefore fancy, as ſome would have it, that Metals, Minerals, and Stones, are the Fruits and Products of the Earth, becauſe they are found in it: any more than we ſhould believe that Trees and Plants are rooted in the Air, becauſe their Fruits grow in it; but rather, that as Trees are rooted in the Earth, though they perfect and ripen their Fruits in the Air; ſo Metals and Minerals are rooted in the Water, though they are formed and come to maturity in the Earth.

§. 6. The firſt Thing then to be conſidered is, what is properly called an *Element.* Now an *Element* is ſuch a kind or portion of Matter, as is the Fountain and Original of particular diſtinct ſeminal Powers and Properties, according to a particular Bleſſing implanted in it by God *Why called an Element.*

at its first Creation, and yielding its proper Productions accordingly. Thus *the Earth*, for instance, is impregnated with the Seminal Virtues of Trees, Plants, Flowers, and Grass. All these are Productions peculiar to the Earth, as the Holy Scripture informs us, *Gen.* i. 11. *Let the Herb bring forth Grass, the Herb yielding Seed, and the Fruit-tree yielding Fruit.* So likewise among the true Philosophers it is past all Controversie, that Metals and Minerals are the proper and peculiar Products of *the Water*, as their *first Matter* or Principle.

§. 7. That is unquestionably the best *Philosophy*, which gives the fairest and best Account of the Works of God. And this Knowledge, every true Lover of God ought to endeavour after, that he may thereby know how many glorious Creatures God has created for our Use and Benefit. And let the trifling Pretenders to Philosophy look to it, that they spend not their Time in impertinent Enquiries, which, instead of teaching them the true Knowledge, lead them into ignorance, and forgetfulness of God and his Creatures.

The Relation of the Elements to each other.

§. 8. The first Thing to be observed and admired, is the mutual Relation and Harmony that is betwixt the different Elements, so that one does as it were breed in the other's Bosom, and bring forth their Fruits for the Use and Benefit of Man. Thus *the Firmament* breeds its Rains, Dews, Winds, and cooling Breezes in the Air, and then sends them down to us. So *the Earth* produces its Fruits in the Air, where they Bud, Blossom, and Ripen, are nourished and cherished by the Fruits of the Air, and kept alive by the Vegetable Spirits of the Universe, without which they would quickly languish and die.

§. 9.

§. 9. And as *the Air* receives into its Boſom the Fruits of the Earth, and kindly cheriſhes them as Foſter-Children; ſo likewiſe the *Earth* and *Water* entertain the Fruits of the Air, *viz.* its generative and vegetable Virtue with which it is endued. For the Air penetrates all the other Elements, and ſupplies them with Life and Vigor. This is plain by *the Fire*, which burns no longer than it is cheriſhed and refreſhed with Air. So alſo the Water, without this univerſal Spirit, putrifies and dies, like the Vegetables upon the Ground. Thus the Water breeds in the Belly and Boſom of the Earth, and there with great and wonderful variety produces its Fruits in greater or leſſer Plenty, according to the difference of Climates and People.

§. 10. Among theſe Productions of the watery Element, the firſt are *the Rivers*; ſo in one Place ſprings up the *Rhine*, in another the *Danube*; here you have the *Elbe*, there the *Nile*; which are not the Element it ſelf, but as it were great Branches of that wonderful living Tree. From hence alſo ſprout forth *little Rivulets*, which are as it were Shoots from the ſame Tree. So that as from one Bough of a great and fruitful Tree, ſpring many little Branches, and a great deal of Fruit; ſo one great Branch of the Element of Water, as the *Rhine* or *Danube*, or even leſs Rivers, produce great varieties of Fruit, ſuch as Rivulets, Springs, Lakes, and Fountains, which all depend immediately upon the great Branch, as that does upon the Tree. *Of* Rivers.

§. 11. So then, all Streams and Rivers are the *Fruits* of this Element, and not the Element it ſelf. The Place of that is the Sea, from whence they ariſe, and to which they return; according to that of *Solomon*, Eccl. i. 7. *All the Rivers run into the Sea, and yet the Sea is*

not full: unto the Place from whence the Rivers come, thither they return again. Now why the Sea is not full, and why it retains its Saltneſs, notwithſtanding the Influx of ſo much freſh Water, is thus accounted for by a certain eminent *German* Philoſopher. *Becauſe,* ſays he, *not only freſh Waters, but all ſalt Waters run into it, and moreover the Seeds of all Salts are originally in the Sea.*

§. 12. Now the ſame that we have ſaid of the Rivers, as the Fruits of the Seas, may be alſo ſaid of *Metals,* Minerals, Gold, Silver, Braſs, Iron, Tin, and Lead; of *Gemms,* Sapphires, Emeralds, Corals, Granats; of *Salts,* as Alom, Vitriol; of *Springs,* Acid, Sweet, Hot, and Cold; of *Rocks and Quarries of Stone,* &c. becauſe in whatever part of the World they are found, they proceed from the Element of Water, and have their Seed, *firſt Matter,* and Root thence. For as many different Trees ſpring out of the Earth, and every Tree has its proper Fruits, ſo the Element of Water ſhoots forth her metallick Trees and Branches into the Cavities of the Earth, and when they are there, they are quickly coagulated into a metallick or mineral Tree, which ſometimes extends its Branches 50 or 60 Miles in Compaſs; and when the Fruits are plucked off, and the Branches lopt, the Tree withers and dies of it ſelf; that is, when the Mines are exhauſted, the vegetable Spirit that impregnated them ceaſes to act, and they produce no more. At the ſame time another Mine is diſcovered elſewhere, at Times and Places appointed by the wiſe Maker and Governour of the World.

§. 13. How ſtupendious then is the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, who has ſo wonderfully created the Fruits of the Water, ſo wiſely diſtinguiſhed them, and ſo plentifully beſtowed them

them on the Sons of Men? who has given them ſo great Beauty, and ſo many Virtues, not only Gold and Silver, but alſo Corals, Pearls, Amber, and Gemms, *Ezek.* xxviii. 14. All which are given us by God, not to ſerve our Luſts, and feed our Vanity, but for the ſupply of our bodily Neceſſities, and the ſetting forth his own Glory, *Rev.* xxi. 19. *Iſa.* liv. 12. Here let us call to mind the Twelve precious Stones upon the Breaſt-plate of the High Prieſt, and conſider what they were deſigned to repreſent, *Exod.* xxviii. 17. Let us conſider the great Variety, in one Place Acid; in another, Salt; in another, Hot; yet all medicinal. For as the Earth produces various Fruits, Bitter, Sharp, and Sweet; ſo does the Element of Water the ſame.

§. 14. Then as for the Beaſts, Birds, and Fiſhes that ariſe from the Sea, they are without Number, God having bleſſed it with ſo great Fruitfulneſs, both for its vaſt extent, and the Uſe and Benefit of Mankind, that out of this vaſt repoſitory there ariſe, at certain Seaſons, prodigious Quantities of Fiſh, varying in their Kinds every Month, and making a kind of Fiſh Harveſt. For ſuch is the Nature of Sea-Fiſh, that they are not to be caught but at certain Seaſons. *Fruitfulneſs of the Waters.*

§. 15. And here it is obſervable, that the Sea and all its Productions, have, as the other Elements, their proper Order, Time, and Motion implanted in them by God. So in the Heavens, the *Stars* have their ſtated Times, regular Order, Motion, Riſing, and Setting. So *the Earth* at certain Seaſons produces different Fruits and *Vegetables*, and in that Senſe is in perpetual Motion, and never reſteth till it hath brought forth all its Fruits. So likewiſe the Sea hath its innate Laws of Motion, Flux and

Reflux, and so produces all its Fruits by a secret, internal, and vital Motion, at such appointed Seasons as may best serve the Use and Benefit of Man.

Of the Flux and Reflux of the Sea.

§. 16. Various are the Opinions of Men about the Flux and Reflux of the Sea; some ascribe it to the Sun, others to the Increase and Decrease of the Moon. But whosoever has a true Notion of the System of Nature, and what that is which is properly called an *Element*, that it has a natural intrinsick Motion implanted in it, as well *universal* as *particular*, and that thereby it not only moves it self, but produces all Things that are contained in it, he may make a pretty good guess at the reciprocal Motion of the Sea.

§. 17. For as God has bestowed upon all the Elements Life and Motion, both universally and particularly, it would be absurd to imagine, that He has not given the same to the Sea, which is so great a Part of the lower World, but left it unactive and immoveable. So that we may be assured, that the same God who settled the Courses and Order of *the Stars*, the Powers and Motions of the *Air*, and the Times and Seasons of the *Earth*, has also implanted in the great wide Sea, certain *innate and fixt Laws of Time and Order*. And these Laws, these original Impressions, are as it were the invisible Springs that set the vast Machine of Water on Work, and Motion directs its Ebbings and Flowings, and makes it fruitful and productive of Blessing; to these are owing the daily Flux and Reflux of the Ocean, and the imperceptible Increase and Decrease of the *Mediterranean*. This makes the *Euripus* and the *Eubœan* Sea ebb and flow seven times every Day. And by the by, this Flux of the *Euripus* cannot be influenced by the Moon. Though I do not in general deny

ny the relation that may be betwixt the watery Conſtellations of Heaven and the Sea, yet I do not think it ſo very great as it is generally believed to be; and upon this Argument, I think we ought to diſtinguiſh betwixt *a thing having an agreement with another thing, and its being the Cauſe of it.*

§. 18. For though there be ſome Reſemblance or Agreement betwixt the Motions of the Sea, and Changes of the Moon; yet it does not thence follow, that the Moon is the only and ſimple Cauſe of that wonderful reciprocal Motion of the Sea, of which we are ſpeaking. Now from hence we may reaſonably conclude, that the Sea has a ſecret and natural Power of Motion implanted in it, which does in ſome meaſure correſpond with the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies. But if there were no manner of Relation betwixt the ſuperior and inferior Powers, there could not poſſibly be any Motion at all. Thus, by way of illuſtration, who is it that turns the Loadſtone to the Pole, and the Marigold or Heliſtrope to the Sun, but the inward vital Motion that is implanted in them, which being extinct, the Converſion ceaſes? So then every Creature, particularly every Element, has ſuch a vital Power of Motion in it ſelf, independent of any other extraneous Cauſes. But that there is ſome kind of Harmony or Agreement betwixt the Moon and the Sea, no body, I believe, will pretend to deny.

§. 19. *Roſellus* upon this Subject tells us, *That* Albumazar *found, by an infallible Experiment, that the Flux and Reflux of the Sea did not always follow the Courſe of the Moon; and therefore tells us, that the Waters were endued with a double Principle of Motion, the one Celeſtial, and the other Elementary; by the Elementary, it deſcended or moved downwards; by the Celeſtial, it flow-*

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ed with a regular Tide every ſix Hours, but with ſome variation, according to the Proportion and Meaſure of its Efficacy and Strength. *Wilhelmus Anoponymus* gives this following account of it: *When the Sea comes to the extream Weſtern Point, it there makes two Ebbings, the one declining to the South, the other to the North, and the ſame again in the Eaſt. When therefore the Eaſtern and Weſtern Ebb to the North, meet one another, the Sea is thereby forced back from the Shoar; which is that celebrated Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea. And the ſame again is on the Southern Shoars. Others ſay, there are certain Mountains in the bottom of the Sea, which are the Cauſe of its Ebbing and Flowing; for when the Water comes to theſe Mountains, it is ſtruck back with ſuch violence, that it makes a vaſt Declivity or Valley of Water, which neceſſarily cauſes a vaſt Swelling or Mountain behind it. And when it returns again, the Cavity in the Waters that was made before, fills up by the receſs of thoſe Waves that had been forced upon the Shoar. Others aſcribe it to the Riſing and Setting of the Moon, which is the Cauſe* (ſay they) *why it happens but twice in 24 Hours; but becauſe the Moon does not every Day riſe at the ſame Hour, the Flux of the Sea varies in proportion. Others aſcribe it to a hot Spirit or Vapour ariſing from the Bottom of the Sea, which mounts the Water above its uſual heighth, like Water, or any other Liquor, boiling over a Fire.* This is what *Anoponymus* ſays.

§. 20. That which ſeems to ſtrengthen our Opinion is, that the Sea has not only its ſtated Times and Hours of Flowing; but has alſo certain Limits preſcribed by God which it cannot paſs, but when it is come to its appointed Bounds, it immediately retires. Which ſhews plainly that all its Motions are directed and governed by a natural Law, which God himſelf has implanted in it.

§. 21.

§. 21. This internal ſelf-moving Power of the Sea, is alſo further demonſtrated by the riſing and boiling up of the Waters from the very bottom, as if it were forced upwards by ſome violent inward Heat or Spirit, juſt as it does in a Pot or Caldron over a violent Fire. And this *Valeſius* thinks is owing to certain Vapours in the Caverns of the Earth, which being moved by the Stars mount upwards, and cauſe an Ebullition of the Sea, and ceaſes as ſoon as the Vapours have ſpent themſelves. And if this be the Caſe, what need of impoſing ſo much drudgery upon the Moon, as ſome of our Philoſophers lay upon her? If ſhe be the Cauſe of all the aforementioned Phænomena, how much Employment has ſhe only in directing the Motions of the *Euripus*? And what account ſhall we give of other Waters, which do not flow at the ſame time with the Sea?

§. 22. In ſhort, my Opinion is, that we ought to ſtudy not only the Aſtronomy of Heaven but alſo of the other Elements, the Air, Earth, and Sea, and their mutual relation and dependence upon one another. From this their harmony and agreement with the Stars of Heaven, ariſes a kind of *natural Foreknowledge of the Alterations of Weather*, common both to Birds, Beaſts, and Fiſhes. All Nature is full of this ſort of Miracles, many of which are mentioned by St. *Baſil* in his 7th Oration or Sermon upon *the ſix Days Work.*

§. 23. Let us now take a ſurvey of the wonderful Power and Wiſdom of God in the Sea, and ſee what *ſpiritual* and *myſtical* Inferences may be drawn from thence. *Who hath ſhut up the Sea with Doors*, (ſaith God to *Job*, Chap. xxviii. 8, *&c.*) *when it brake forth, as if it had iſſued out of the Womb? When I made the Cloud* *Inferences from the Survey of the Sea:*

the

the Garment thereof, and thick Darkneſs a ſwaddling Band for it, and brake up for it my decreed Place, and ſet Bars and Doors, and ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further. And here ſhall thy proud Waves be ſtaid. Haſt thou entred into the Springs of the Sea? Or haſt thou walked in the ſearch of the Depth? In which words, God ſeems to point out the great and dreadful Ocean as an obſcure Image and Reſemblance of his unſearchable and incomprehenſible Power. For it is really a very ſurprizing Miracle, that God ſhould by his Word alone, as with Bars and Doors, encloſe the Sea ſo ſtrongly, that it ſhould not be able to overflow its Bounds. No leſs wonderful is its Ebbing and Flowing; ſo that the Sea being as it were conſcious and mindful of the Divine Command, ſo ſoon as it touches the Earth, ſeems to fly back and retire in a Fright, as at the Preſence of God himſelf, as *Jordan and the Red-Sea*, Pſal. cxiv. 3. Pſal. xxxiii. 7. *He gathereth the Waters of the Sea together, as it were upon an heap, and layeth up the Deep as in a Treaſure-Houſe.* It is alſo wonderful that the Sea ſhould be higher than the Earth. For when the *Egyptians* were attempting a Paſſage out of *the Nile* into the Red-Sea, it was found that the Sea was 12 Foot higher than the Level of the River and Land of *Egypt*.

§. 24. And whereas God tells Job, *That he has made the Clouds to be the Garment thereof, and thick Darkneſs a ſwaddling band for it*; that plainly appears, when its Waves roll and toſs themſelves up to the Clouds, which do as it were receive them into their embraces, and cover them with darkneſs and horror, ſo that they ſeem to be blended with each other. Then do appear the mighty Wonders of God, which a Man cannot behold without fear and aſtoniſhment; as it is beautifully deſcribed, *Pſal.* cvii.

§. 25

§. 25. To this Work of the fifth Day, belongs alſo that of the holy Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* civ. 25, 26. *In the great and wide Sea alſo are things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great Beaſts. There go the Ships, and there is that Leviathan whom thou haſt made to take his Paſtime therein.* In which Words are pointed out four Properties of the Sea. (1.) Its vaſt Extent. (2.) The innumerable Multitude of its Fiſhes and Monſters. (3.) Its Navigation. (4.) The great Whales. Of all which we ſhall ſpeak particularly.

§. 26. And firſt as for *the greatneſs and wideneſs of the Sea*, who can chuſe but admire the Power of God, which, notwithſtanding that ſo much Water flows into the Sea every Day, and has done ſo from the beginning, yet ſuffers not its Waters to exceed their appointed Quantity? And though its Waves ſometimes rage and ſwell, and lift themſelves above the Mountains; yet are they quickly at reſt, and ſettled within their proper Bounds. Which are clear Demonſtrations of the mighty Power of God. A certain eminent Philoſopher of *Germany* is of Opinion, that the Sea *is the Grave and Sepulchre* of all Waters, into which, ſo ſoon as ever they come, they putrifie and die, like dead Carcaſſes put under ground; and that therefore its Waters do not encreaſe. And ſo indeed all freſh Waters, when they fall into the Sea, grow Salt, and as it were dead, in reſpect of their former freſhneſs. But as the ultimate Matter of all things is a Salt, and every Water has its proper Salt within it, ſo ſoon as ever they come into the Sea, and have diſcharged their Salts into it, they immediately undergo a ſort of Putrefaction, and Separation. And upon the Account of this *Salt* it is, that the Sea will not ſuffer any dead Carcaſes in it, whether of Men or Beaſts, but caſts them

them out. *Anoponymus* delivers his Opinion thus: *The Sea* (ſays he) *lies under the torrid Zone, and is condenced by its Heat, and thereby becomes ſalt; for Water, by heat, is eaſily changed into a Salt.* Again. *The exceſſive Heat* (ſays he) *that is in the bottom of the Sea, fires the Earth that lies beneath it, and this inflamed Earth mixing with the Sea-water makes it ſalt.*

Of Iſlands. §. 27. Under this Head *of the Largeneſs of the Sea,* we may not improperly ſpeak of the *Iſlands*; who can behold without wonder, ſeveral large and populous Countries and entire Kingdoms, lying in the midſt of the Sea, as if they had been planted or ſown there? Who can tell on what Foundations they are built, and what it is that keeps them fixt and immoveable in the midſt of violent Storms and Tempeſts? though ſome of them indeed being incompaſſed with vaſt Rocks growing out of the Sea, are ſuppoſed to be built and founded on them. Tho' upon the whole, their fruitfulneſs, tillage, fruits, and the occaſion and manner of their being Peopled, is what we may rather admire than underſtand. So that (which is very ſtrange to ſay,) the Sea is as populous as the Earth. For as the Earth is much leſſer than the Sea, it is probable, that God would not ſuffer the greateſt Part of the Globe to be uninhabited, and therefore he planted it up and down with Iſlands: that none of the Miracles and Bleſſings which He works in the Sea, might eſcape the Obſervation of Mankind. Therefore alſo to theſe Iſlanders did He ſend the Goſpel of Truth by his Holy Apoſtles, *Shaking both the Sea and the dry Land after the Deſire of all Nations was come,* Hag. ii. 6, 7.

§. 28.

§. 28. (2.) No leſs wonderful is *the vaſt Multitude of Creatures that inhabit the Sea*; for ſome affirm that there is as great Plenty and Variety of them in the Sea, as is on the Land. Who can behold without Aſtoniſhment, prodigious Shoals of Fiſh riſing from the Depths of the Sea, like a Flock of Sheep, and offering themſelves to the Uſe and Neceſſities of Mankind? So that the Sea is a great Store-houſe of God, out of which He feeds the greateſt Part of Mankind, and out of which He produces many other excellent Fruits, ſuch as Pearls, Amber, and Coral; of which *Ovid* ſpeaks; *The Sea Inhabitants.*

Sic & Coralium, quam primum concipit auras,
Tempore dureſcit, mollis fuit herba ſubundis.

——— ——— A tender watry Plant,
If for a while we it to Air expoſe,
Hardens in Time, and to a Coral grows.

§. 29. I come (3.) to *Navigation*. An Art taught us by God, as we learn from the Story of *Noah*'s *Ark*, which was built, and pitched within and without, by the ſpecial Command of God, *Gen.* vi. 14. And there ſeems to be ſomething particular in that Expreſſion uſed, *Gen.* vii. 16. that when *Noah* was entred into the Ark, *God ſhut him in*; as if he had been clapt under hatches. To this Head may be referred that of *Wiſdom*, Chap. xiv. 2. *Deſire of Gain deviſed Navigation, and the Workman built it by his skill. But thy Providence, O Father, governeth it: For thou haſt made a Way in the Sea, and a ſafe Path in the Waves: Shewing that thou canſt ſave from all Danger, yea, though a Man went to Sea without Art. Nevertheleſs, thou wouldeſt not that the Works of thy Wiſdom ſhould be idle, and therefore do Men commit their Lives to a ſmall* *Of Navigation.*

piece

piece of Wood, and paſſing the rough Sea in a weak Veſſel are ſaved. For in the old Time alſo, when the proud Giants periſhed; the Hope of the World governed by thy hand, eſcaped in a weak Veſſel, and left to all Ages a Seed of Generation. For bleſſed is the Word whereby Righteouſneſs cometh.

§. 30. I might here mention the many ſtupendious Voyages that have been performed within the Memory of us and our Fathers, to the moſt diſtant Parts of the *Eaſt* and *Weſt*, and all this chiefly by the Aſſiſtance of the *Magnet*, a Stone that ſeems to have nothing in it either of Beauty or Uſe, and yet by it the greateſt things are performed; by this the Pilot ſteers his Ship, and keeps his way in the Pathleſs Waters; and by conſtantly pointing to the Pole, it guides the Mariner to his intended Port. Of theſe Voyages, and of the Iſlands, Countries, People, and other uſeful Diſcoveries, there are many Volumes extant, to which I refer the Reader.

Of Whales. §. 31. *Laſtly*, (4.) *The huge Whales*, mentioned by holy *David*, give us a great Idea of the mighty Power of God. Of this God himſelf takes notice when He talks with *Job*, Chap. xl. 13, 14. xli. 9, 11, 16, 22. *His Bones are as ſtrong pieces of Braſs, his Bones are like Bars of Iron, he is the chief of the Ways of God. He drinketh up a River, and haſteth not: He truſteth that he can draw up Jordan into his Mouth. By his Neeſings a Light doth ſhine, and his Eyes are like the Eyelids of the Morning. Out of his Mouth go burning Lamps, and ſparks of Fire leap out; out of his Noſtrils goeth ſmoak, and a Flame goeth out of his Mouth. When he raiſeth up himſelf, the mighty are afraid: by reaſon of breakings they purifie themſelves. He maketh the Deep to boil like a Pot: He maketh the Sea like a Pot of Ointment.*

§. 32.

§. 32. Thus much for the *greatneſs of the Sea*; which is a very great Illuſtration of the Power of God. *Who hath meaſured the Waters in the hollow of his Hand?* ſaith *Iſaiah*, Chap. xl. 12. To which the Pſalmiſt anſwers, *Pſal.* cxxxv. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he in Heaven, in the Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places.* All then that remains is, to Praiſe, Honour, and Glorifie *the Wiſdom of God*, which is ſo wonderfully manifeſted in the Deep; the Riches of his Goodneſs in that vaſt variety of Fiſhes, and other Productions of the Sea, for the Uſe and Benefit of Man; and in a Word, to adore and magnifie Him in all his Works.

§. 33. Let us now conſider, how this Doctrine of the Sea, may bring to our remembrance that *twofold* Sea mentioned in Scripture: *The Sea of Affliction* and Miſery; and *the Sea of Grace* and Comfort: The *Depths* of Miſery, and the *Abyſs* of Divine Mercy. For what is this *Life* and World of ours, but a troubleſome and tempeſtuous Sea? For as the Sea is never at reſt, but is perpetually ruffled with Winds and Waves, ſo is the Life of Man. Sometimes we fancy our ſelves ſafe and out of Danger, when on a ſudden a ſtormy Wind ariſes, and the Floods ſwell, to the great Danger of Body and Soul. As the Sea has its ebb and flow, ſo has the Life of Man; and the true Cauſes of both are to us alike obſcure. Hence that of the Prophet, *Iſa.* li. 10. *Jer.* xxxi. 35. *Pſal.* cvii. 25. *I the Lord dry up the Sea, the Waters of the great Deep.* And that of the Son of *Sirach*, Chap. xi. 14. *Proſperity and Adverſity, Life and Death, Poverty and Riches, come of the Lord.* Moreover, as we ſee the *freſheſt* Waters, when they come into the Sea, grow *ſalt* and *brackiſh*; ſo do all the Pleaſures, Glories, Honours, and Riches of this mortal Life, however ſweet and pleaſant at firſt, ſoon

The twofold Sea in Scripture.

grow bitter and unſavory. And all that cleave to them, do thereby forfeit the ſweet Conſolations of Heaven, and are drowned and overwhelmed in bitter Fears, and perplexing Sorrows.

Spiritual and myſtical Inferences hence drawn.

§. 34. As the Sea has many *Rocks* and *Quick-ſands*, on which Veſſels ſplit and are loſt; ſo in humane Life, many there are that ſplit upon the Rocks of Covetouſneſs, and run foul on the Quickſands of worldly Pleaſures, and are loſt to all Eternity. As the Sea, after ſome Days, *throws up the Carcaſes* that have been caſt into it; ſo the World ſpews us out, after ſhe has entertained us a little while; ſo that it is our higheſt Wiſdom to look out betimes for a Haven of Salvation in the *Land of the Living*. As the Mariner ſails at random without his *Compaſs*, and has no certain Guide but his Needle, which is continually pointing to the Pole: So *Jeſus Chriſt* is our Loadſtone, continually drawing our Hearts towards Him and Heaven, that we may not float up and down at random, or be loſt in the Sea of this World. As the Depth of the Sea is unſearchable, according to *Job*, Chap. xxxviii. 16. *Haſt thou entred into the ſprings of the Sea? or haſt thou walked in the ſearch of the Depth?* So is our Life an unſearchable Abyſs of Miſery and Sorrow. Whence that of the Pſalmiſt, *Out of the Deep have I called upon thee, O Lord*, Pſal. cxxx. 1. And *one Deep calleth another, becauſe of the Noiſe of the water Pipes, all thy Waves and Storms have gone over me*, Pſal. xlii. 9. So that our Life is nothing but a vaſt Sea of Calamity and Sorrow.

§. 35. To this Abyſs of Miſery and Sin, we muſt oppoſe the Abyſs of *Grace* and Conſolation. And the firſt *Comfort* is, *the boundleſs Mercy of God*, which is higher than the Heavens, and deeper than the Sea. Of this the Prophet *Mi-*

cah

cah ſpeaks, Chap. vii. 19. *He will have Compaſſion on us, and caſt all our Sins into the Depths of the Sea.* Juſt as the *Egyptians* were drowned in the Red-Sea, *Exod.* xiv. 28. ſo muſt all our Sins be drowned and waſted away in the Blood of Chriſt. And though the Abyſs of our Miſery be never ſo great, yet the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt* are greater.

§. 36. The *ſecond* Comfort is, The Conſideration of *the many Wonders that God hath wrought in the Water*: And that the bleſſed *Jeſus* always aſſiſted his Diſciples when they were in danger by Sea, *Matt.* viii. 26. He ſtretched out his Hand to *Peter*, when he was afraid of ſinking, *Matt.* xiv. 31. So at this Day, He is never nearer to us, than when we are ſinking in the Floods of Affliction; and we never are ſo ſenſible of his Preſence and Aſſiſtance, as when we are under the Croſs, *Iſai.* xliii. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the Waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee.*

§. 37. A *third* Conſolation is contained in theſe Words of the Prophet, *Zech.* xiv. 8. *It ſhall be in that Day, that Living-waters ſhall go out from Jeruſalem: Half of them toward the former Sea, and half of them toward the hinder Sea.* So alſo the Prophet *Ezekiel*, Chap. xlvii. 8. ſaw a Stream of Water flowing out of the Temple near the Altar into the Sea, healing and quickening every thing that was touched by it. This ſignifies the *Fountain of Grace* and Conſolation opened by the Holy Spirit by the Preaching of the Goſpel, whereby the bitter Waters of Affliction are to be refreſhed and ſweetned; ſo that the Croſs ſhall be no longer a dead Sea, but a Water of Life, and a Well of Salvation. According as it is ſaid, *Pſal.* xiv. 19. *In the midſt of the Sorrows that I had in my Heart, thy Comforts have refreſhed my Soul.*

§. 38. The *fourth* Conſolation againſt the ſtormy Sea of this World, is contained in *Pſal.* lxv. 7. *Thou ſtilleſt the Raging of the Sea, the Noiſe of its Waves, and the Madneſs of the People.* As if he had ſaid ; when all things threaten Ruine and Deſtruction, when Wars rage, and Deſolation ſeems to be at hand ; then can God eaſily *ſtill the* Waves, as did the bleſſed *Jeſus*, Matt. viii. 26. *Though the Waves of the Sea are mighty, and rage horribly, yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier*, Pſal. xciii. 5.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Living CREATURES, the Work of the ſixth Day

GEN. i. 24.

And God ſaid, Let the Earth bring forth the living Creature after his Kind, Cattle and creeping Thing and Beaſts of the Earth after his Kind : and it was ſo.

Pſal. civ. 21. *The Lions ſeeking after their Prey, do ſeek their Meat from God.*

The Knowledge of Solomon *with reſpect to theſe.*

§. 1. SOLOMON ſays of himſelf, Wiſd. vii. 20. *That he knew the Natures of living Creatures, and the Furies of wild Beaſts* ; adding, *that Wiſdom, the Maker of all Things, taught it him.* From whence it appears, that a true and ſolid Knowledge of the Nature of Animals, is a Part of natural Wiſdom. *And out of the Ground the Lord formed every Beaſt of the Field, and every Fowl of the Air, and brought them unto Adam,*

to

to ſee what he would call them: And whatſoever Adam called every living Creature, that was the Name thereof. And Adam gave Names to all Cattle, and to the Fowl of the Air, and to every Beaſt of the Field.

§. 2. In this, *Adam* gave an illuſtrious Proof of the Divine Wiſdom implanted in him by God, to the Honour and Praiſe of Him that gave it; he beheld his Wiſdom and Goodneſs in the Variety of his Creatures; he conſidered the diſtinct Forms, Figures, Proportions, and Colours of them all; he diſtinctly viewed, and perfectly underſtood the Phyſiognomy and Signatures of the Brutes by the Light of Divine Wiſdom, and upon a full Survey of the Temper, Nature, and Properties of every Creature, he gave them proper and ſignificant Names, expreſſing their ſeveral Natures. From this natural Knowledge of the Signatures of all Creatures, he called her that was made out of his Rib, *Woman, becauſe ſhe was taken out of Man,* Gen. ii. 19, 23. afterward *Eve, as being the Mother of all Living.* *And of* Adam

§. 3. So even at this Day, God ſhews to us the Natures and Properties of all Creatures in his holy Word, that we may thereby be led to praiſe and magnifie the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of Him that made them. Thus *Job* xii. 7. *Ask now the Beaſts, and they ſhall teach thee, and the Fowls of the Air, and they ſhall tell thee; or ſpeak to the Earth, and it ſhall teach thee, and the Fiſhes of the Sea ſhall declare unto thee.* So Chap. xxxix. 1. He leads us as it were into every quarter and corner of the brute Creation, putting us in Mind of the many Wonders of divine Power and Mercy manifeſted in every one of them. So *Jeremiah,* Chap. viii. 7. ſends us *to the Stork and the Crane, the Turtle, and the Swallow, who know the appointed Times of their coming.* Iſaiah, in Chap. i. 3. ſends us *to the Ox and the Aſs, who know* *The Uſe and Benefits here of to us.*

their Maſter's Crib. David *and* Job *to the young Ravens that call upon God,* Pſal. cxlvii. 9. Job xxxix. 3. *David* again, *Pſal.* lviii. 5. *to the deaf Adder that ſtoppeth her Ears.* Iſaiah, *to the Cocatrice Eggs and Vipers,* Chap. lix. 5. *Jeremiah,* Lam. iv. 3. *to the Sea-Monſters, that draw out their Breaſts, and give ſuck to their young ones.* Adding, *The Daughter of my People is become cruel like the Oſtriches in the Wilderneſs.* So the Song of *Solomon,* Chap. ii. 9, 14, 15. ſpeaks of the *young Hind, the Dove, the Turtle, and the Foxes.* David, *of the Hart panting after the Water-Brooks,* Pſal. xlii. 2. *Sololomon,* of *the Ant,* Prov. vi. 6. *David* and *Iſaiah,* of *the Eagles,* Pſal. ciii. 5. Iſa. xl. 31. *They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their Strength like the Eagles.* Laſtly, *Habbakkuk* and *Jeremiah,* of *the Wolves, Leopards, and Lions,* ſent to be Executioners of Divine Vengeance, *Hab.* i. 8. *Jer.* v. 6.

§. 4. So alſo in the New Teſtament, the bleſſed *Jeſus* ſpeaks of the *Sparrows, not one of which falleth to the Ground without their Heavenly Father,* Matt. x. 29. Thus He ſpeaks *of the Wiſdom of Serpents, and Innocency of Doves,* Ver. 16. *Of the Hen gathering her Chickens under her Wings,* Matt. xxiii. 37. Of the *Eagle's following the Carcaſe,* Matt. xxiv. 28. Of *the Dogs that eat the Crumbs that fall from their Maſter's Tables,* Matt. xv. 27. So He deſcribes his *own Sheep,* with their ſeveral Properties, *Joh.* x. 27, 28. *Laſtly,* He talks *of the Scorpion and Serpent, which no Father would give to his Children when they ask for an Egg, or a Fiſh,* Luk. xi. 11, 12.

§. 5. Here it may be conſidered why the Bleſſed *Jeſus* himſelf is compared to a *Lamb,* Iſa. liii. 7. only to expreſs his exemplary Meekneſs and Patience. Why the Bleſſed Spirit lighted upon the Son of God in the Form of a *Dove,* Matt. iii. 16. but becauſe the Groans of a Dove reſem-

reſemble the Groans of the Spirit in the Hearts of the Faithful. Hence *Hezekiah* ſays of himſelf, *Iſa.* xxxviii. 14. *I did mourn as a Dove.* Why, *Ezek.* i. 10. *Rev.* iv. 6, 7. the *four living Creatures had the Faces of a Man, an Ox, a Lion, and an Eagle*? They expreſs to us the Four mediatorial Offices of Chriſt; his *Incarnation, Sacrifice, Reſurrection,* and *Aſcenſion.*

God's wonderful Providence over the Creatures.

§. 6. Here alſo we may conſider the wonderful *Providence* of God, whereby He protects, ſuſtains, and nouriſhes all his Creatures. Thus, *Pſal.* lxv. 2, 6, 9, 10. *To thee ſhall all Fleſh come. Thou ſhalt ſhew us wonderful Things in thy Righteouſneſs, O God of our Salvation, Thou that art the Hope of all the Ends of the Earth, and of them that remain in the broad Sea. Thou makeſt the Outgoings of the Morning and Evening to praiſe Thee. The River of God is full of Water.* In which Words the Prophet celebrates the paternal Mercies of God towards all his Creatures, *He ſaveth Man and Beaſt,* Pſal. xxxvi. 7. This Conſideration ſhould ſtrengthen our Faith and Perſeverance in Prayer, under all the Wants and Neceſſities of Soul and Body. And whereas he mentions the Word *Fleſh, to thee ſhall all Fleſh come*; this ſeems to have a particular regard to our bodily Wants and Sufferings, as we are Fleſh and Blood; ſuch as Hunger, Cold, Nakedneſs, *&c.* and ſhould at the ſame time put us in Mind of our own Vileneſs and Corruption, which is frequently in Scripture expreſſed by the Word *Fleſh,* Iſa. xl. 6. The Prophet gives us further Comfort, by adding, that there is no Man ſo vile and contemptible, as to be deſpiſed or forgotten before God. Whichis expreſſed to us in theſe Words: *Thou that art the Hope of all the Ends of the Earth, and of them that remain in the broad Sea.* As if he had ſaid; ſo great is the Love of God to Mankind, that

whereſoever they are, whether by Land or Sea, He ſtill takes care to protect and defend them. And whereas he adds, *that the Outgoings of the Morning and Evening praiſe him*; his meaning is: That as God feeds and nouriſhes all Creatures, ſo He comforts and refreſhes them too, according to that of St. *Paul*, Acts xiv. 17. *Filling our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs.* For it is no ſmall Bleſſing to feed upon his Creatures with a cheerful Mind, to begin the Labours of the Day with devout Prayers and Praiſes, and to conclude it with Thankſgiving. *Laſtly*, he aſſigns the *Cauſe*, in theſe Words: *The River of God is full of Water*, i. e. The Fountain of divine Bounty, Mercy, and Goodneſs, overflows to all his Creatures, upon which our Being and Comforts entirely depend.

§. 7. To this alſo may be referred that Paſſage, *Pſal.* civ. 27. *All things wait upon thee, that thou mayeſt give them their Meat in due Seaſon.* And not only ſo, but he repreſents alſo the brute Creatures, as ſenſible of this dependence upon God, *Ver.* 21. *The Lions roaring after their Prey, do ſeek their Meat from God*; intimating thereby, that God, the Preſerver of Nature, is moved to pity and aſſiſt the Diſtreſſes and Sufferings of every Creature. And that the Wants of every Part of his Creation, whether animate, or inanimate, are a ſort of ſilent Prayer to the great Author and Preſerver of their Being. And this is called by St. *Paul*, *the earneſt Expectation of the Creature*, Rom. viii. And here let us conſider what an infinite variety of Creatures there are contained in the Air, Earth, and Sea, and that God has mercifully provided for the comfortable Subſiſtence of every one, in a Way ſuitable to their proper Natures. And now if God takes ſuch care of the Meaneſt of his Creatures, it would be abſurd to imagine,

that

that *Man, created in his own Image,* ſhould be neglected or forgotten by Him.

§. 8. And ſeeing there are more Creatures in the Earth, Air, and Sea, than there are Men in the whole World; and that the Providence of God is extended to the Meaneſt and Smalleſt of his Creatures, How is it poſſible that *Man* ſhould be forgotten? *Man, that lives, moves, and has his being in him. For in him we live, and move, and have our being,* ſaith St. *Paul,* Act. xvii. 28. Man, that is ſuſtained by his Power: *For he ſuſtaineth all Things by the Word of his Power,* Heb. i. 3. Man, whom He hath made with his own Hand; according to that of *Iſa.* lxiv. 8. *Lord, Thou art our Father, we are the Clay, and thou art the Potter, and we all are the Work of thy Hand.* Man, whom He has redeemed by the Blood of his only Son, and ſealed with his Holy Spirit. In a Word, my Opinion is, that God can no more forget Man, than He can himſelf. So that we have all the Reaſon in the World to depend upon Him, *that He will give us Meat in due Seaſon.*

§. 9. The Prophet goes on: *When thou giveſt it them, they gather it: when thou openeſt thy Hand, they are filled with good.* In which Words is expreſſed that Power or Faculty whereby the Creatures are preſerved. And this conſiſts in a certain natural Sagacity or Inſtinct implanted in them by God, whereby every one of them is prompted to look out, and procure ſuch things as are proper for the Support of their Life and Being. And the Pleaſure they receive in the Enjoyment, is a ſort of Gratitude and Acknowledgment to God, whom they ſeem to look upon and rejoice in, as their Maker, Preſerver, and Benefactor.

§. 10.

§. 10. And if God take ſo much care for the comfortable Subſiſtence of all his Creatures, we cannot think that He made Man for perpetual Anguiſh and Sorrow, but is pleaſed to ſee us innocently cheerful in the Fear of God. So *Pſal.* xc. 15. we are directed to pray, *that God would comfort us again after the Time that He has plagued us, and for the Years in which we have ſuffered Adverſity.* And *Iſa.* lxv. 13. He promiſes his Servants that they ſhall Eat, Drink, and Rejoice. And from the Words of holy *David*, it plainly appears, that He intends to feed his Servants, not ſparingly, but plentifully and bountifully; to which end, He maketh *his Clouds drop Fatneſs*, Pſal. lxv. 12. Experience it ſelf alſo teacheth us, that all the Creatures are ſo plentifully fed by God, that at proper Seaſons, the Birds of the Air, the wild Beaſts of the Foreſt, the Cattle in the Fields, and the Fiſh of the Sea, offer themſelves Fat and in good Caſe, for the Uſe and Nouriſhment of Man; and in that Senſe alſo *the Clouds drop fatneſs.* So wonderful is the Providence of our great Maſter, ſo tranſcendent is the Wiſdom, ſo great is the Concern of God to provide for all the Neceſſities of his Children.

§. 11. *Laſtly*, Whereas the Pſalmiſt adds, *Ver.* 29. *When thou hideſt thy Face they are troubled, when thou takeſt away their Breath they die, and are turned again to their Duſt. When thou letteſt thy Breath go forth they are made. Thou reneweſt the Face of the Earth.* His meaning is, that the Life of all Creatures is nothing elſe but the *Breath of God*, or that enlivening Spirit and Virtue implanted in all Creatures. Thus it is ſaid, *Wiſd.* xi. 26. xii. 1. *O Lord, thou lover of Souls. Thine incorruptible Spirit is in all Things*; i. e. thy quickening and preſerving Power, by which at firſt thou createdſt, and ſtill preſerveſt

all

all Things. And this quickening Virtue and Power of God, is that WORD by which all Things were made. *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made,* (Pſal. xxxiii. 6.) *and all the Hoſt of them by the Breath of his Mouth.* And this Word was not a bare empty ſound, but became the Life of all Creatures, reſting upon them as a Principle of Life and Power, as St. *Paul* tells us: *The Lord ſuſtaineth all Things by the Word of his Power,* Heb. i. 3. So that the Life and Being of all Things does as much depend on God, as the Shadow of a Tree does upon the Subſtance.

§. 12. So that when God withdraws this Word of Life, or vital Power, from the Creatures, they immediately ſink into their primitive Duſt and Nothing, like the broken Shells of a Nut when the Kernel is gone, or like the Staves of a Veſſel, when the Hoops are taken off. The whole World is full of God, *from whom, and by whom, and for whom are all things,* Rom. xi. 36. Eph. iv. 6. He is ſaid *to be above all, and through all, and in us all. So that the Lord is the Strength of our Life,* Pſal. xxvii. 1. Deut. xxx. 20. For as Men of ſorrowful and diſtreſſed Spirits perceive a true and vital Power in the Word of God; ſo there is in all Creatures a ſort of natural and vital Power, which is nothing elſe but the *Word of Creation,* the Privation of which is Death. By this Word alſo all the Creatures are bleſſed and multiply. By this the Face of the Earth is every Year renewed by a Succeſſion of Plants, Fruits, and living Creatures, as if there were a new World every Year. *While the Earth remaineth,* (ſaith God to *Noah,* Gen. viii. 22.) *Seed-time and Harveſt, Cold and Heat, Summer and Winter, Day and Night, ſhall not ceaſe.* And by the ſame Bleſſing, the World is preſerved to this Day.

§. 13.

Wherein this universal Providence consists.

§. 13. But this *wonderful and universal Providence of God* consists chiefly in three Things. *First in his Knowledge. Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World.* By this infinite and incomprehensible Wisdom, He knoweth, seeth, and heareth all things: Therefore He is called in Scripture, *The God that liveth and seeth*, Gen. xvi. 14. * Therefore no Creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and open in his Sight. And He is called, *the Living*, not only because He himself liveth for ever, but also because He is the Life of all Things.

1. In the universal Knowledge of God.

* Lahai-roi.

2. In his Paternal Goodness.

§. 14. The *second* Head of Divine Providence, is *his fatherly Goodness*, by which He taketh care of all Things, *Matt.* vi. 26. *He maketh his Sun to rise on the Good, and on the Evil*, Matt. v. 45. So then if his Mercy be not only extended to the least, but even to the undeserving Parts of his Creation; how ungrateful are we, if ever we entertain any suspicions of so indulgent a Father. And if nothing be done upon Earth but by his appointment and direction: We may from hence learn to submit with Patience to every thing that befals us, without repining or murmuring against God; firmly believing that He careth for us, and by his unsearchable Wisdom ordereth all Things for our Good, and his own Glory. This is called in Scripture, *the Indignation of the Lord*, Mich. vii. 9. On the other hand, if He take from us our Riches, Honours, Health, and other worldly Blessings, we must resign them with cheerfulness, and say with holy *Job*, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*, Job i. 21. He, good Man, gave thanks to God for his Adversity, as well as for his Prosperity, and the former very often proves the greater Blessing of the too.

§. 15.

§. 15. The *third* Head of God's univerſal Providence over all his Creatures is, his *Omnipotence.* By this He is always preſent to his Creatures, governing and preſerving them; by this He governeth the Hearts of all Men, and turneth them which way He pleaſeth, *Pſal.* xxxiii. 15. Whence it follows, that in all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, we ought to have a lively and devout Senſe of this divine Omnipreſence, and dread to do any thing that is hateful in his ſight. For as is the Clay in the Hand of the Potter, ſuch are Men in the Hand of God. According to that of *Jeremiah*, Chap. xviii. 2. *Ariſe, go down to the Potter's Houſe, and I went down, and behold he wrought a Work on the Wheels, and the Veſſel that he made of Clay was marred in the Hand of the Potter, ſo he made it again another Veſſel*, &c. intimating thereby, that God, who afflicteth and breaketh us to pieces, can alſo heal and reſtore us again. 3. *In his Omnipotence.*

§. 16. Moreover, as we are aſſured that God is every where, and preſerveth and governeth every thing, it follows, that He is ſo exactly careful of his own Servants, *that not an Hair of their Heads can fall to the Ground* without his Permiſſion, *Matt.* x. 30. and that He preſerveth and keepeth us *in the midſt of our Enemies*, as we have it frequently in the Pſalms, *Pſal.* xxiii. 4. xxvii. 1. cxxi. 5. So when we are in Diſtreſs, and no apparent hopes of Relief, we ſhould ſupport our ſelves with this Conſideration: That the Lord himſelf, *great in Counſel, and mighty in Work*, Jer. xxxii. 19. that laid our Croſs upon us, can eaſily lighten it, or ſtrengthen us to bear it. *Let us commit our way unto the Lord*, Pſal. xxxvii. 5. like *Abraham*, who was ready to offer up his only Son, without queſtioning how God could perform *The Divine Omnipreſence*

form his Promiſe to him, but caſt all his Care upon God, *Gen.* xxviii. 8. *Rom.* iv. 18. *Heb.* xi. 19.

Farther Conſiderations on the Divine Providence.

§. 17. *Laſtly,* The Conſideration of God's Providence, raiſes in us *Faith, Hope,* and *Patience,* of which we have Examples in *Job, David,* and *Chriſt* himſelf. The bleſſed *Jeſus* knowing that He was appointed by God to die, therefore preſerved his Meekneſs and Patience all the Days of his Life, yea, even in the very Agonies of Death, *Phil.* ii. 8. even to his Reſurrection. Thus *David* patiently underwent a ten Years Baniſhment, attended with Injuries, Reproaches, Poverty, and Contempt, knowing aſſuredly, that it was God that laid it upon him. This makes him cry out, *Pſal.* iii. 4. *Thou, O Lord, art my Defender, thou art my Worſhip, and the lifter up of my Head.* To which may be referred that Paſſage, 1 *Sam.* ii. 6. *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh Poor, and maketh Rich, he bringeth low, and lifteth up.*

Of MAN.

§. 18. But before we conclude this Subject, we muſt ſay ſomething particularly of MAN, the Crown and Maſter-piece of the Creation, of his Beauty and Prerogative, which muſt needs be very great, foraſmuch as God himſelf has declared, that *his delight is with the Children of Men,* Prov. viii. 31. For if all things were created for the Uſe of *Man,* and he is the End of this viſible Creation, it follows, that he is the Perfection of it. As he is the Microcoſm or leſſer World, the Abridgment and Epitome of all the Creatures, it follows, that their ſeveral Excellencies and Perfections are moſt perfectly ſummed up in him. For Reaſon it ſelf convinces us, that whatſoever is the End and Perfection of all Things, muſt be more Excellent

than

than them all. So then all the Beauty of Fountains, Fields, Flowers, Trees, Fruits, and Woods, yea, and all the glittering Brightneſs of Heaven, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, is not to be compared with the native and original Beauty *of Man*, for whoſe Sake and Benefit they were all created. *For as Solomon in all his Glory was not to be compared with the Flowers of the Field*, as our bleſſed Saviour ſays, *Matt.* vi. 29. So the Beauty of Man, eſpecially as *to his Soul*, does far tranſcend, not only the external Glory of *Solomon*, but all the Beauties of this lower World, yea, and of the Sun it ſelf.

§. 19. And as for the Soul, we may gueſs at her Excellency and Beauty, by the Form and Comelineſs of the Body which God has prepared for her Reception and Reſidence. He provided a comely Manſion for ſo excellent a Gueſt. So then if we could ſee the ſpotleſs Beauty of the original humane Body, we ſhould eaſily gueſs at the Beauty of its divine Inhabitant. Even now in this corrupt and depraved State of Nature, we ſee what attractive Charms there are in Beauty, and even theſe proceed from the indwelling Soul. Moreover, we may gueſs yet farther at the Beauty of humane Nature, by the Glories of the Place in which God at firſt placed him; which was *Paradiſe* it ſelf, a Garden full of Joy and celeſtial Pleaſures, infinitely exceeding all the Glory and Beauty of the preſent World; for if the Place were ſo glorious, what muſt the Owner of it be, for whoſe ſake it was created? *The Dignity of Humane Nature.*

§. 20. Another great Argument of the Dignity of humane Nature is, that the *Angels* themſelves are appointed to miniſter unto us, and to guard us, *Heb.* i. 14. And that we were created as it were by a particular Decree of the ever-bleſſed Trinity. *Let us make Man*, (ſaith

(ſaith God, *Gen.* i. 26.) *in our Image, after our Likeneſs.* So that how great ſoever our Dignity may be by that ſingular Decree and Counſel by which we were made, yet that which ariſes from the *Image of God*, in which we were created, is much greater. Therefore when He created the Elements, the Sun, Moon, and all the Hoſt of Heaven, He but *ſpake the Word, and they were made.* But when He was about to make Man, the greateſt and nobleſt of all his Works, He uſhers it in with a kind of Solemnity, ſaying, *Let us make Man.* How wonderful is that Counſel! How ſolemn is that Decree! How tranſcendent is the Majeſty and Dignity of humane Nature!

§. 21. For though the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and all the lower World, were made with wonderful Wiſdom and Power; yet there does not ſeem to be that Deliberation that was uſed in the Creation of Man, foraſmuch as in him, the Glory and Majeſty of God was more particularly and gloriouſly to be manifeſted. All the other Creatures bear upon them certain *Marks and Signatures* of divine Goodneſs and Power, but Man is the very *Image* and Likeneſs of God. For it is not ſaid, Let us make Man in the Image of the Sun, or of the Moon, or of the Angels; *but in our own Likeneſs*, that our own Image may be clearly repreſented in him.

The Excellency of the Humane Soul.

§. 22. Conſider therefore, (Chriſtian Reader) the Beauty and Dignity of thy Soul, which is created in the Image and Likeneſs of God, ſo that the Glories of the Divine Majeſty are in Proportion transferred to thee. How much reaſon have we then to avoid all Impurity and Uncleanneſs, that we defile not the Beauty of the Divine Image. For if we are thereby exalted to the higheſt Glory and Honour that our Nature is capable of, how unworthy and ungrateful

grateful would it be, to pollute it by any Uncleanneſs, and ſo forfeit that Glory which God has beſtowed on us.

§. 23. How highly is a Picture or Statue prized, that is well done by an eminent Hand; and could ſuch a Picture or Statue be endued with Underſtanding, how would it eſteem its Maker, and take all Opportunities of ſhewing its own Gratitude, and its Maker's Glory! How ſenſleſs then, how ungrateful is Man, to forget the Hand that formed him! to deſpiſe that excellent Beauty with which his Maker endued him! and to pollute it with all Kinds of Impurity! *Plato* himſelf has told us, *that the Beauty of the Soul conſiſts in Virtue and Piety.* But did we but conſider the Union of our Souls with God and Chriſt, the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt wherewith our Souls are cloathed, as with a Garment of Glory and Immortality, (*Iſa.* lxi. 10.) we ſhould more eaſily underſtand what the true and inward Beauty of our Souls is, which depends entirely upon that of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and if it be ſo, who can queſtion but that the Soul is moſt exquiſitely Beautiful, ſince it derives its Beauty from Him who is Beauty it ſelf?

§. 24. To this belongs that Paſſage of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, Chap. xvi. 14. *Thy renown went forth among the Heathen for thy Beauty: For it was perfect through my Comelineſs which I had put upon thee, ſaith the Lord God.* For if Children partake of the Beauty of their Parents according to the Fleſh; it is more reaſonable to believe, that our Souls do, by ſpiritual Regeneration, receive a ſpiritual Beauty from God. Moreover, it cannot be doubted, but they are the moſt Beautiful of all Creatures, ſince the Son of God himſelf does not diſdain to betroth himſelf unto them, and to adorn them with his own Light and Beauty. Upon this account,

the faithful Soul is called, *Pſal.* xlv. 15. *A Queen or King's Daughter, all glorious within, whoſe cloathing is of wrought Gold.* If a Plebeian Woman be ennobled by Marriage with an Huſband of Quality; can we doubt but that the faithful Soul, by being married to the moſt noble and beautiful Spouſe, ſhall alſo partake, in an high degree, of his Beauty and Glory. Upon this St. *Ireneus* has a beautiful Thought, he ſays, *That the Glory of Man is GOD, but that the receptacle of all the Operations of divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs is Man.*

§. 25. *Laſtly*, As it is paſt all Controverſie, that the moſt High God does particularly delight to dwell in the Soul of Man; that He has ſanctified it to be the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, the Habitation of the Father, and the Bride-Chamber of the moſt beautiful Spouſe, the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, we may certainly conclude, that ſhe is the moſt Beautiful of all Creatures. And as *Ezekiel* tells us, *that our Soul is perfected by the Comelineſs of God*, Ezek. xvi. 14. How great muſt that Beauty, how rich muſt that Attire, how tranſcendent muſt thoſe Ornaments be, which ſo great and noble a Spouſe can beſtow upon the Bride which He has prepared for himſelf? O how wonderful is the Grace! How incredible the Beauty which God beſtows upon humane Souls! Could it but be ſeen by mortal Eyes, it muſt charm the moſt ſtupid Beholder. And this Beauty increaſes every Day by our Prayers, and devout approaches to God. So that *we are changed from Glory to Glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. For if the Face of *Moſes*, after a few Days converſing with God, ſhone with the Brightneſs of divine Glory, *Exod.* xxxiv. 35. how much more ſhall our Souls, by the ſame Converſation, be enlightened and beautifyed with high-

higher Degrees of Light and Glory? But of this I ſhall ſpeak more fully in the *Second Part of this Book*, which is *deſigned as a particular Treatiſe* upon the Nature of Man.

A PRAYER.

O *LORD GOD, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, ſanctified be thy Name in me thy poor Creature, for all the Works of thy Hands, and eſpecially for honouring and advancing me among the Creatures which Thou madeſt, and ennobling me with the Light of thy Countenance which Thou didſt imprint upon the Lamp of my Heart, thereby diſtinguiſhing me, as well from ſenſible, as ſenſleſs Creatures, and placing me but a little beneath thy Angels, that I might with them, and with all thy Works of every Order, exalt and magnifie Thee for ever; ſerving Thee with a* reaſonable Service, *according to that Nature which Thou haſt put into me; who, to the Intent that I ſhould wholly ſerve Thee, haſt appointed all thy Creatures to ſerve me. For Thou haſt indeed put all Things under Man's Feet, by the Order of Creation, that Man alone ſhould wholly be ſubject unto Thee. And to the End that Man ſhould be wholly Thine, Thou haſt made him Lord, under Thee, of all thy Works. For Thou haſt created all outward things for his Body, his Body for his Soul, and his Soul for thy ſelf; that he might ſerve Thee only, and love thee only, poſſeſſing Thee to his comfort, and all inferior things for his Servants. For whatſoever is contained under the Cope of Heaven, is inferior to Man's Soul, which was made to inherit the ſovereign Goodneſs above, and to become happy and bleſſed by poſſeſſing it. Unto which, if I cleave* St. Auguſtin.

faſt, I ſhall ſurmount the need of all the inferior and viſible Things, which are changeable, and ſhall, in the End, quietly behold thy ſovereign Majeſty, whereof I was made to repreſent the Image. O when ſhall I thus behold thy Majeſty, O my God, in Glory unchangeable; and enjoy thoſe excellent good Things in thy Houſe, in Compariſon whereof, all the things that I ſee, both in Heaven and Earth, are accounted as nothing. Thoſe be the things which no Eye hath ſeen, no Ear heard, nor Heart conceived, which Thou haſt prepared for them that love Thee; and which are ſhadowed forth by the viſible things which are thy Workmanſhip. And truly thoſe things which are ſo inconceivable, wilt Thou, Lord, give unto my Soul, as my Soul ſhall delight in thee: And with theſe doſt Thou daily make glad the Hearts of thy choice Servants. But why ſhould I wonder at this, O my Lord God? Foraſmuch as Thou honoureſt hereby thine own Image and thine own Likeneſs whereunto I was created, and whereunto I am in thy Son renewed, with all thy Servants, my Brethren and Siſters. For to the End that our Body might ſee, Thou haſt given us the Light of the viſible Heavens, by the means of thine unweariable Servants, the Sun and Moon, with the goodly Hoſt of the Stars, who do continual Service Day and Night to thy Children: To the Intent it might Breath, Thou haſt granted us the Air: To the Intent it might Hear, Thou haſt given us the Diverſity of Sounds: To the Intent it might Smell, Thou haſt given us the Sweetneſs of Scents: To the Intent it might Taſt, Thou haſt given us Qualities of Savours: To the Intent it might Feel, Thou haſt given us the Subſtances, all bodily Things. To help us in our Neceſſities, Thou haſt given us Beaſts of Carriage: To refreſh us withal, Thou haſt beſtowed on us the Fowls of the Air, and the Fiſhes of the Sea and the Fruits of the Earth. For every Sore, and every Diſeaſe of Man, Thou haſt created Medi-

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cine out of the Earth: And for every ſeveral Evil, Thou haſt prepared a ſeveral Remedy to encounter it; becauſe Thou art Merciful and full of Compaſſion; and Thou who art our Potter, knoweſt whereof we are made, and how that all of us are as Clay in thine Hand. And if Thou, O Lord God, doſt ſend ſo great, and ſo innumerable Benefits unto me, for this baſe and corruptible Body of mine, from the Sky, and the Air; from the Land and the Sea; from the Light, and Darkneſs; from Heat, and Shadow; from Dew, and Rain; from Wind, and Showers; from Snow, and Hail; from Fowls, and Fiſhes; from Beaſts, and Cattle; from Trees, and Shrubs; by diverſity of Herbs, and Things that grow upon the Earth; and by the Service of all thy Creatures, ſerving our turns by Courſe in their Seaſons, to eaſe us in our Wearineſs, and to ſupport us in our Paſſage to Thee: How excellent, I pray Thee, and how great and innumerable ſhall thoſe good Things be, which Thou haſt prepared for them that ſerve and love Thee, in thine Heavenly Kingdom, where I hope to ſee Thee Face to Face! If Thou doſt ſo much for us in Priſon, O what wilt Thou do in thy Palace! Great and innumerable are thy Works, O Lord, Thou King of Heaven: And they all praiſe Thee. O let thy great Mercy, by this Conſideration of them, be opened unto me: Shine, O ſhine upon me yet more and more with thy Light, I beſeech Thee, that it may be the more opened unto me. For by theſe leaſt Things, I comprehend thy great Things: And by theſe viſible Things, I begin to comprehend thine inviſible Things, O Holy Lord God, my moſt Good and Gracious Creator, and Benefactor. And ſince now all theſe things, as they come forth from Thee, are good and pleaſant, which Thou haſt delivered to good and bad Men together in common: What manner of things ſhall thoſe be which Thou haſt laid up in Store for the

Good only? And if this our Priſon, contain ſo many delectable Things, how much more delectable things containeth our Father's Houſe! For great art Thou, O Lord, my God: Neither is there End, Number, or Meaſure of thy Bounteouſneſs, and thy Loving-kindneſs; and according to thy Majeſty, ſo is thy Mercy, even over all thy Works. O how great is thy Houſe, and how large is the Place of thy Poſſeſſion! Great, and hath none end: High and unmeaſurable. Bleſſed therefore be the Builder of this Houſe: Yea, bleſſed be the Lord, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; and let all thy Works bleſs Thee, O Lord, and praiſe Thee, and magnifie Thee for ever, with thine Almighty and Eternal Word, by that Spirit which filleth and reviveth all things. Amen.

OF

OF

True Chriſtianity.

The FOURTH BOOK.

PART II.

Treating particularly of the Nature of MAN.

CHAP. I.

Shewing that from the Works of the Creation it may be plainly proved, that God is an Infinite and Eternal BEING, without Beginning or End, an infinitely wiſe and underſtanding Spirit.

Jer. xxxii. 17, 18, 19. *Lord God, thou haſt made the Heavens and the Earth by thy great Power, and ſtretched out Arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. The Great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hoſts is thy Name. Great in Counſel, and mighty in Work.*

§. 1. GOD is the Original of Life and Being in all Creatures, ſo that in Him they live, and move, and have their being.

ing. Whence it follows, that He was before all Creatures, both an eternal Being, and *eternal Life it ſelf.* Otherwiſe He could not have given Life and Being to his Creatures; but the *infinity* of God does yet more plainly appear from *the Mind* and Thoughts of Man. For as the Sun, in the Space of 24 Hours, runs through the whole Circle of Heaven, which the Mind of Man can do in a Moment, and comprehend in its Imagination all the Creatures of the Univerſe; it follows, that God that made him, does comprehend all theſe Things in a more perfect Manner, and by conſequence muſt be *infinite.*

§. 2. All the Attributes of God, are *eſſential* to Him. As therefore He is *infinite*, ſo is his Eſſence and Life alſo infinite. For Eſſence and Life are inſeparable from Him. Moreover, as He has endued the Soul of Man with Wiſdom and Underſtanding, it follows, that the eſſential Underſtanding and Wiſdom of God muſt be infinite. For whatſoever is in God, is *eſſentially* and eternally in Him. And as the Unity of the divine Nature is ſo perfect, that his Wiſdom cannot be ſeparated from his Eſſence and Life, it follows, that both are equally infinite and eternal.

§. 3. But if the Wiſdom of God be eternal and infinite, it will follow, that He *knoweth* all things from Eternity. Moreover, as his Eſſence is unchangeable and immoveable, equally filling all Places; ſo his Underſtanding does not proceed by way of rational Connexion, or diſcurſive Operation from one Idea to another. So then He knoweth and underſtandeth all Things in an inſtant, and to Him there is nothing paſt or to come, but the whole Circle of Eternity is preſent to Him. For as God ſtands in need of no Creature to add any thing to the

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Perfection of his Being, ſo neither does He to his Underſtanding. And as He is God, independent of all Creatures; ſo He penetrates and comprehends all Things in himſelf. So that *the Sands of the Sea, and the Drops of the Rain, and the Days of Eternity, are known to him*, Ecclus. i. 2. And not ſo much *as a Bird of the Air, or an Hair of our Heads, can fall to the Ground without him*, Matt. x. 29, 30. He knoweth the Days of the World, every Hour and Moment of Time, with its ſeveral Periods and Revolutions; nor is any thing under the Heavens hid from Him. For as by his infinite Power He created all Things, ſo by his infinite Wiſdom He underſtandeth and comprehendeth all Things; even the moſt ſecret Thoughts of Man, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 2, *&c.*

§. 4. Moreover, as his Eſſence, Life, and Wiſdom; ſo alſo his Power is infinite; and all equally uncapable of any Addition or Diminution. *Laſtly*, Foraſmuch as no Creature can oppoſe or ſet Bounds to his Power, therefore He is *Almighty*. All which muſt neceſſarily be, foraſmuch as his Eſſence, Life, Wiſdom and Power, are inſeparable.

CHAP. II.

From the Creation of all Things it is plain, that God is the chiefeſt Good.

Rom. xi. 36. *From him, and by him, and for him, are all Things.*

§. 1. AS it is plain from Reaſon, that he muſt be the *chiefeſt and only Good*, in whom all good Things are contained; it follows,

lows, that the Glory and Praiſe of it belongs to God alone, becauſe from Him, and by Him, and for him are all Things. All the Goodneſs that is found ſcattered up and down among the Creatures, is in a moſt perfect and excellent Manner and Degree contained in him. So that whoſoever turneth himſelf to the Creatures, and cleaveth unto them, will always find himſelf poor, needy, and diſtreſſed. Whilſt he that turneth unto God with his whole Heart, he purſues the chiefeſt and moſt perfect GOOD, and ſhall be bleſſed in the Enjoyment of it, ever rich, ever at eaſe, ever bleſſed in the Fruition of his God. By which it appears, that perfect Happineſs is not to be found in the Enjoyment of the Creatures, and that they who fix their Hearts and Deſires on the World, can expect nothing but anguiſh, diſquiet, and diſappointments, both in Life and in Death, whilſt they want that chief Good, which alone can ſatisfie and make happy the Soul of Man.

CHAP. III.

That Man is the moſt Noble of all Creatures; ſince they all were made *for him*, and he *for God*.

Pſal. c. 3. *Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves, we are his People, and the Sheep of his Paſture.*

§. 1. ALL the Creatures, in their ſeveral Kinds and Orders, were created by God, for *the Uſe and Benefit of Man*: Thus we ſee the ſuperior Bodies acting upon the inferior, the Elements producing Corn and Paſture, theſe feeding

feeding the living Creatures, and all ſerving for Food to Mankind. One aſſiſting another, the higher Wheel ſetting the lower a going, and all in a wonderful Harmony concurring in one great End, which is the Uſe and Benefit of Man. And if all this be for his ſake, he is certainly more Noble than them all; and from hence he ſhould learn, what Dependence he has upon God, what Duty and Service he owes to Him, who has appointed all the Creatures, in their Order, to miniſter to his Neceſſities.

§. 2. And as all the Creatures ſeem to aim at no other end, than the Uſe and Service of Man, and ſeem to reſt and be ſatisfied in obtaining that end: So ought Man likewiſe to ſhew the ſame Diligence and Faithfulneſs in the Service of God, that the Creatures ſhew to him. All his Works and Labours ought to be directed to this one end; *viz.* to accompliſh the Will of God, and do nothing but what is well-pleaſing in his Sight. For as all Things are inceſſantly employed in ſerving Man, the Nobleſt of all Creatures; ſo there is all the Reaſon in the World, that he ſhould be as conſtant and aſſiduous in the Service of God, who is Perfection it ſelf, and to whom alone he is indebted for that ſuperiority which he has over the reſt of the Creatures.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

That God made Man in his own Image, that he might take the higheſt Delight and Pleaſure in Him,

Prov. viii. 31. *My Delights are with the Sons of Men.*

Pſal. civ. 31. *The Lord ſhall rejoice in his Works.*

EVery Artiſt has a natural Love and Fondneſs for the Works of his own Hands, and it is that alone that makes him take ſo much Pains about it. *God beheld all things that he had made, and behold they were very good*, Gen. i. 31. And if He took ſo much delight in the general Survey of his Works; how much greater Pleaſure, think we, muſt He take in Man, whom He created after his own Image? For the more like any thing is to our ſelves, ſo much the more tenderly do we love it. Thus a Father has a ſtronger Affection for his Son, that partakes of his own Nature, than for an Houſe which himſelf has builded, though never ſo exact and regular in its ſelf.

§. 2. Moreover, as God is highly delighted with a Creature like himſelf; therefore it was neceſſary that, after the other Creatures were formed, He ſhould create Man in his own Image, in whom He might reſt and delight himſelf. And as ſimilitude is the Foundation of Friendſhip and Society, and every thing naturally aſſociates with its like; it follows, that God, in making Man after his own Image, intended to delight and rejoice himſelf in him; ſo that Man

Man ought likewiſe to cleave unto his God, and to delight and take Pleaſure in converſing with Him.

§. 3. *Thirdly*, As God is the moſt perfect Love, He could not but deſire to communicate himſelf, and all his Bleſſings, to ſome other Being: but that could not be done, without making ſome Being like himſelf; for there can be no Union without Similitude; and as there was no ſuch Being then in Nature, capable or worthy of ſuch divine Communications, therefore He created Man in his own Image, which conſiſts chiefly in *perfect Charity*. And as there is naturally a reciprocal Love betwixt the giver and receiver of any Benefit; hence it follows, that it is the Duty of Man to entertain, with the higheſt Affection, and moſt ardent Love, his heavenly Benefactor, who ſo affectionately deſires to communicate himſelf, and all the Riches of his Goodneſs, to his unworthy Creatures.

CHAP. V.

That God, by his Love, beſtows himſelf upon us.

1 Joh. iv. 16. *GOD is LOVE.*

§. 1. AS Man devotes himſelf entirely unto God by Love; ſo God beſtows himſelf entirely upon Man by the ſame Love. And as that Love of his is in the higheſt Degree of Perfection, He cannot chooſe but give us himſelf: *For the higheſt Inſtance of Love, is to beſtow one's ſelf upon the Perſon we love.* And as a Conſequence

quence of this perfect Love, He was obliged to beſtow himſelf upon us in the Perſon of his only begotten Son. And this is the true Spring of the Incarnation, Paſſion, and Death, of the Son of God. Thus our bleſſed Saviour finely and excellently argues, *Joh.* iii. 16. *So God loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*; i. e. God loved the World with an entire and perfect Love, and therefore gave them his only Son. But as the eternal Love of God, is the Fountain of eternal Life to the World; and that eternal Love is manifeſted by *Chriſt Jeſus*, in and by whom we have everlaſting Life, therefore our Lord further adds: *That whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.*

CHAP. VI.

How much Man is indebted to God for his everlaſting Love.

1 Joh. iv. 19. *We therefore love God, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

§. 1. IN every Benefit or Gift, there are three Things to be conſidered: *The Giver*; *the Receiver*; *and the Gift it ſelf.* As then there is a natural Obligation upon the Receiver to the Giver, it is manifeſt, that as Man has received all that he has from God, ſo he owes all to Him, and is under the ſtricteſt Obligations of Love and Obedience to his great Benefactor. And as Man conſiſts of Body and Soul, ſo God has plentifully provided for the Comfort and Happineſs of both.

§. 2.

§. 2. As for his Body, it is ſuſtained and refreſhed by the various Productions of all the Elements, and every part of Nature ſeems to call upon him, and put him in Mind of his Creator, in Words like theſe: *Conſider, O Man, the Benefits which thy Maker has beſtowed upon thee by our means, and what returns of Gratitude and Service thou oweſt Him for the ſame. I* (ſaith the Heaven,) *give the Day-Light to work in, and ſend Darkneſs in which thou mayeſt ſleep and take thy reſt. I give thee the pleaſant Spring, the hot Summer, the fruitful Autumn, and the cold Winter, in their proper Seaſons. I* (ſaith the Air,) *ſupply thee with Breath, and infinite kind of Birds. By me* (ſaith the Water,) *art thou waſhed, and thy Thirſt quenched; by me thou art ſupplied with all Kinds of Fiſh. I bear thee, and ſuſtain thee,* (ſaith the Earth,) *and ſatisfie thee with Bread, Wine, and Fleſh; by all which thou mayeſt know how much thou art beloved by Him that made thee and me for thy Uſe, every one of whoſe Favours are as ſo many Bonds and Obligations upon thee.*

CHAP. VII.

Of the Things that improve, inſtruct, and comfort the Soul.

Job xii. 7. *Ask now the Beaſts, and they ſhall teach thee; and the Fowls of the Air, and they ſhall tell thee; or ſpeak to the Earth, and it ſhall teach thee.*

§. 1. LET us now ſee what Proviſion God hath made for the Comfort and Inſtruction of the Soul of Man. And here we ſhall find

find every Creature in their Order, ſome way or other ſubſervient to this End. And firſt, I ſhall ſpeak of the Pleaſure which Man receives from the Creatures.

§. 2. Man alone has the Privilege of really enjoying what he poſſeſſes. Other Creatures being void of Underſtanding, have no reliſh of thoſe Bleſſings, from whence Man receives very great Comfort; ſuch as are Gold, Silver, and precious Stones, *&c.* For he being endued with an underſtanding Mind, reflects with gratitude and pleaſure upon the Goodneſs of God, who has provided ſo many beautiful Creatures for his Uſe and Benefit. O the wonderful Goodneſs of God, who has made all the Virtues and Excellencies of the Creatures ſubſervient to the Happineſs of Man; ſo that they are no more than Channels or Inſtruments of Conveying that happineſs to us, which they themſelves are not capable of Enjoying! Thus the Sweetneſs and Goodneſs of the Water, the Fragrancy and Beauty of Flowers, the Light and Glory of the Sun, Moon, and all the Hoſt of Heaven, yield no pleaſure to themſelves, but all conſpire to promote the Happineſs of Man. Nay, without them, Man would have no Enjoyment at all in this World; nor could he have any notion of the Dignity and Pre-eminence of his Nature above that of other Creatures, but by comparing his Condition with theirs: This ſhews him the tranſcendent Goodneſs of God manifeſted to him above all the reſt of the Creation; this teaches him to be thankful for his Beautiful Shape and Stature, his erect Countenance, but above all, his rational Soul, created after the Image of God. From all which it appears, that the Knowledge of a Man's ſelf is his higheſt Wiſdom, and the want of it, the moſt deplorable Folly.

§. 3.

§. 3. Moreover, the Creatures were made, not only for the *Delight* of Man, but much more to be *his Monitors and Inſtructors.* From them we may learn, that our chief Good conſiſteth not in worldly and fleſhly Enjoyments; ſuch as Eating, Drinking, and the gratifying the other bodily Appetites, all which are common to the Beaſts as well as to us; which is a convincing Argument, that Man being of a more noble Frame and Nature than they, ought to look for other Meat and Drink, and other Pleaſures ſuitable to the Dignity of his Nature, of which the inferior Creatures cannot ſhare with him. I need not here mention, that the greateſt Part of humane Wiſdom ariſes from the Contemplation of the Creatures. Thus our Muſick came from the Sound of Metals; our Skill in Phyſick, from the living Creatures; and our Aſtronomy, from the Stars; which ſtill farther illuſtrates my firſt Obſervation, that the whole World was created for the ſake of Man, for which he is infinitely obliged to his munificent Creator.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Obligations which Men lye under to God.

Pſal. xcii. 5, 6. *O Lord, how glorious are thy Works, thy Thoughts are very Deep. An unwiſe Man doth not well conſider this, and a Fool doth not underſtand it.*

§. 1. THE *Obligations* which Man lieth under to God, are as many and as great, as are the Favours which he hath received from Him, or the Excellencies which He

hath beſtowed upon all the Creatures. For as every Creature was made for his Uſe and Benefit, ſo ought his Gratitude to riſe in Proportion for them all. If a King ſhould beſtow great Eſtates and Honours upon a Company of Children in the ſame Family, and but one of the Number had Age and Senſe enough to know the Greatneſs of the Favour and Honour that is done to them, he alone is certainly obliged to thank him in the Name of all the reſt, and would be guilty of Ingratitude if he did not. So in this World, the reſt of the Creatures are like little Children, that know not the Worth and Value of God's Bleſſings, as *Man* does, who therefore is alone obliged to adore and praiſe Him in the Name and ſtead of all the reſt, and is highly ungrateful if he does not.

CHAP. IX.

That Man is more indebted to God for his inward, than for his outward Bleſſings; with ſome Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul.

Wiſd. xi. 27. xii. 1. *Lord, thou lover of Souls, thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things.*

Gen. ix. 2. *Let the Fear of you be upon every Beaſt of the Earth.*

Wiſd. ii. 23. *God created Man to be Immortal, and made him to be an Image of his own Eternity.*

§ 1. MAN, as he knows himſelf to be the moſt Excellent of all the Creatures, ſo ought he to be more thankful to God for the Perfections of his own Being and Nature, than for

for thoſe of all the reſt of the World. For all things elſe were made for his ſake, he muſt of Neceſſity be more Perfect and Excellent than they. The Sun, the Moon, and all the Hoſt of Heaven, thoſe glorious and incorruptible, and I may add, immortal Bodies, all wait upon Man, and do him ſervice. But this, not upon the Account of his *Body*, which, conſidered in this corrupt State, is leſs excellent than theirs; but upon the Account of his Soul, which is in every reſpect ſuperior to them. For the very Notion of Servitude implies a Superiority in the Perſon to whom the Service is paid. So that it would be unnatural for thoſe glorious Bodies to do that Service to Man, if he had not an immortal Soul, and by conſequence, a more excellent Nature than they.

§. 2. And upon the Account of this Immortality of the Soul, it is a baſe and unworthy thing for a Man to fix it upon any thing that is mortal and periſhing; becauſe it is uncapable of uniting with any thing but what is immortal, and particularly with God himſelf. The Body indeed converſes with corporeal Objects, and is capable of terreſtrial Enjoyments; but the Soul ſhould be united ſolely unto God, that as a King, He might be enthroned and bear Rule in her; and in this conſiſts the Excellency of Man above all other Creatures, that his Soul is the Throne, the Image, and Habitation of God. Greater Honour than this, no Creature is capable of: therefore Man is the moſt Excellent of all, and is infinitely obliged to the Author and Giver of ſuch ineſtimable Benefits.

CHAP. X.

How much Wiſdom and Art God has ſhewn in the Formation of Man.

Pſal. civ. 24. *In Wiſdom haſt thou made them all.*

§. 1. AS in the political State there are three Orders; ſo are there likewiſe in the natural Body. The firſt is, the *vegetative* or *nutritive Faculty*; which is to the Body, the ſame that the Husbandmen and Labourers are to the State, being employed in raiſing the Appetite, digeſting and concocting the Food, ſeparating the Juices, and all the other inferior Offices of the animal Oeconomy. This *lower* Faculty works Night and Day, for the Security and Preſervation of its Betters. For ſuch is the Conſtitution of the Humane Body, that if the lower Faculties be out of Order, or ceaſe to operate, the ſuperior, which depend upon them, cannot ſubſiſt.

§. 2. The next Faculty is, the *Senſitive*, diverſified by the five Perceptions of *Seeing*, *Hearing*, *Taſting*, *Smelling*, and *Feeling*, which are all more or leſs noble, the one than the other. The Sight is more noble than the Hearing, becauſe Objects are ſeen at a much greater Diſtance than they are heard. The Hearing is more noble than the Taſte, as being capable of exerting it ſelf at a greater Diſtance. And for the ſame Reaſon, the Taſte and Smelling are more noble than the Feeling, which is the weakeſt and loweſt of all.

§. 3.

§. 3. The third *Order*, which is the higheſt and moſt noble of all, anſwers to the Magiſtracy or Government in the State, and is divided into the *Reaſon*, the *Will*, and the *Memory*. Theſe govern and command the Faculties, having each a diſtinct Office and Function from the reſt. Theſe are not corporeal, as the others, but perfectly *ſpiritual* Faculties; and are therefore more noble and excellent than the reſt. Beſides which, they are alſo endued with that perfect Liberty, that they cannot be compelled to any thing. For, who can force the Will to deſire what it has no mind to; or to hate that which it loves? the Will is altogether free, and cannot be forced. So then theſe three Faculties are the *Senators* in Man, who decree and execute all Affairs relating to the whole. This ſupreme Order, are *cloathed* with Virtues proper to each of them; as the *Will* with Righteouſneſs; the *Underſtanding* with Wiſdom; the *Memory* with Eloquence, *&c.* In ſhort, this is the Government, this the Oeconomy ſettled by God in Humane Nature.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Obligations that Man lies under towards God, for the Mercies and Benefits he has received from Him.

1 Cor. iv. 7. *What haſt thou, that thou haſt not received?*

§. 1. THERE are two very general and comprehenſive Favours, for which Man is exceedingly obliged to God, the one *viſible* and corporeal, which is this *World*; the other ſpiritual and *inviſible*, which is *the Love of God.* And though this latter be indeed the firſt, as being the Root and Foundation of all his other Bleſſings, which are no more than infinite Rivulets flowing from this univerſal Fountain of divine Love; yet becauſe it is inviſible, the Folly of Man does hardly conſider it as any Mercy at all. So that Man being delighted only with viſible Things, does not regard or conſider, that the Love which is concealed under them, is greater and better than the Things themſelves. In a Word, as Smoak is a certain Sign of Fire; ſo are the Bleſſings of God, a certain Proof of his Love towards us.

§. 2. As then the Gifts and Bleſſings of God are as it were certain Steps to mount up to God himſelf; it follows, that his Love is as great as his Gifts are; and as He made the whole World for the ſake of Man, and created all Creatures for his uſe, and regards them only as they ſerve and miniſter to his beloved Creature *Man*; as He has exalted, and loved him

him above all Creatures; and as this love of God is the moſt ſincere, pure, hearty, ſafe, and in a Word, the higheſt Good, which prompted him to form and love Man, not for any advantage He was to reap from him, but out of the Overflowings of his free Grace and boundleſs Love; from all theſe Conſiderations, I ſay, it is plain, that Man is more indebted to God for this Love, than for all the particular Gifts and Favours that God can beſtow, and Man receive.

§. 3. For as there are two Things to be conſidered in every Favour, the *Love* that precedes and influences the Giver; and the *Gift* it ſelf, which is the Conſequence of that Love; the former is not only more Noble and Valuable than the latter, but is in all reſpects equal to the Perſon that ſhews it. Hence it follows, that the Love of God is as infinitely Good and Great, as God himſelf, the Author of it. Which confirms the Poſition firſt laid down, that Man is more obliged to God for his Love, than for any or all his particular Graces and Favours. And as Man cannot ſubſiſt a Moment without the Favour and Mercy of God, for on Him his Breath and Life entirely depend, it is plain that his obligations to God are greater than thoſe of all the Creatures beſides.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Ways of Anſwering thoſe Obligations that Man lies under to God.

Pſal. xviii. 2. *I will love thee, O Lord, with all my Strength.*

AS God has freely and generouſly beſtowed all his Gifts and Bleſſings on Man; He thereby obliges him to make ſome ſatisfaction and return for all theſe Mercies. Now he can offer and dedicate nothing unto God, but what is entirely in his own Power; ſo that all his outward Goods and Riches, are not a proper Offering for God. But as God has beſtowed on him his greateſt Bleſſing, which is his Love, ſo he expects to be requited with Love again. And as the Love of God to Man is in the higheſt Degree of Perfection, ſo the Love that He requires from us, ought to be perfect, with all our Heart, with all our Minds, and with all our Strength. And how juſt this return is, both Nature and Reaſon may convince us. For nothing is more natural and reaſonable than to love them that love us, and to proportion our love to theirs; whoſoever does not this, is ungrateful, and unworthy of that Love which he refuſes to requite. And when God does not meet with this reciprocal Love from Man, as He very ſeldom does, He has then juſt reaſon to complain of their Injuſtice and Ingratitude, ſeeing he requires nothing from Man but Love, in return for all that infinite Love and Mercy which He has ſhewn to him.

§. 2.

§. 2. Moreover, ſuch is the Nature of Love, ſo ſweet, ſo pure, ſo free, and ſo acceptable, that neither Fear, nor Honour, nor any other thing, is good or deſirable, but as it is ſeaſoned and ſweetned with Love. No Man ever was ſo Great, as to deſpiſe the Love of his Inferiors; but the Greater a Man is, the more does he court the Love and Eſteem of thoſe below him. Yea, ſo true is this, that God himſelf, the moſt Mighty and Excellent of all Beings, is ſo far from deſpiſing the Love of Mankind, that He earneſtly courts and deſires it. This then being certain, that Love is the greateſt Treaſure any Man has, he is obliged to offer it to God, as He has beſtowed the Fulneſs of his Love upon Man. By what I have here advanced, I would not be underſtood to mean, that this perfect Love ſince the Fall, is perfectly in our own Power, or that by it we can make a perfect Return to God for all his Benefits. All my Deſign is to ſhow, that we are convinced in our own Conſciences, not only from the Word of God, but alſo from the Light of Nature, that we ought to love God, as He hath loved us.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

That God's Love appears in all his Works, even in his Chaſtiſements and Corrections.

Wiſd. xii. 18. *But thou maſtering thy Power, judgeſt with Equity, and ordereſt us with great Favour: for thou mayeſt uſe Power when thou wilt.*

§. 1. AS Love is *the Root and Principle* of all the divine Acts and Operations, it follows, that even *Afflictions*, which are the Work of God, proceed from Love, and ought to be entertained by Man as inſtances of God's Favour. For *Love* is the Root of all the Operations of God. So that no Man ought to murmur againſt God when He corrects him, or repine at his Chaſtiſements, or quarrel with his Judgments. For our Sufferings are not chargeable upon God, but upon our ſelves. This would become us much better, to bear his Corrections without remitting our Love towards Him, even as He puniſhes us, and yet tenderly loves us ſtill. And this would be a true Inſtance and Proof of the Sincerity of our Love towards God.

§. 2. And though there be no proportion betwixt the Love of God towards Man, and the Love which the moſt perfect Chriſtian bears to God, the one being infinite, and the other finite; yet it is our Duty continually to aim at the higheſt Degrees attainable by us. We ſhould endeavour that our Love may be holy, modeſt, ſincere, and perſevering even in the midſt of Sufferings

ings and Afflictions, as the Love of God towards us is ardent, pure, unchangeable, and everlasting, even whilst He punishes and afflicts us for our Sins. If we do not this, we are the most ungrateful of all his Creatures, every one of which, in their Order and Capacity, answer the transcendent Love of God, with a pure and unfeigned Love and Obedience.

CHAP. XIV.

How, und upon what Account, Man is obliged to love God.

Cant. viii. 7. *If a Man would give all the Substance of his House for Love, it would utterly be contemned.*

§. 1. HItherto we have distinctly considered the Obligations that Man lies under to God. Which is a Doctrine founded upon that natural relation that is betwixt the Givers and the Receivers, and this is as it were a perpetual Light of Nature, to direct us to the several Branches of our Duty to God. For as God has bestowed freely upon Man every thing that he possesses, (from whence the Obligation arises,) it plainly follows, that Man is obliged to offer up and restore back unto God, all that he has received from Him. On the other hand, if God had given nothing, and Man received nothing, there had then been no Obligation, nor any Rule or Measure of Duty. But as the *Love of God*, is the first and chief Benefit He has bestowed on Man; so it is but just and reasonable, that He who has so loved us, should be loved by us again.

So

So then Man has nothing from himſelf, nor from others *originally*, but all Things from God, and by conſequence, is obliged ſolely to God. And this Obligation can no otherwiſe be diſcharged, than by loving Him entirely with all our Hearts, and with all our Strength. *Laſtly*, As Man continually depends upon God for his Life and Being, as he continually enjoys his Favours and Bleſſings, and by his Command and Order, the Service and Aſſiſtance of the Creatures, nothing leſs can be expected from ſo dependent a Being, than love to Him that has ſo generouſly and bountifully obliged him.

CHAP. XV.

That all the Creatures are continually putting us in Mind of the Love we owe to GOD.

Prov. viii. 1. *Doth not Wiſdom cry, and Underſtanding put forth her Voice? She ſtandeth by the Top of high Places, by the Way, in the Places of the Paths.*

§. 1. AS God hath loved Man above all the Creatures, or, to ſpeak more properly, hath loved him only, having created them all for his ſake; ſo this continual and perpetual Love of God, calls upon us, and warns us to love Him with all our Hearts; yea, every Creature of the Univerſe, whilſt by God's Command they ſerve us, and miniſter to our Neceſſities, do as it were with united Voices call

call aloud, and put us in Mind of the natural Obligations we are under to magnifie and adore, to ſerve and love ſo gracious a Benefactor, and that freely and willingly, as they by God's Command freely and cheerfully aſſiſt and miniſter to us.

§. 2. And as their Love and Service to us, is not falſe and hypocritical, but ſincere and faithful; ſo ought ours to be to our Creator. As they employ their whole Strength Night and Day to ſerve us; ſo ought we Night and Day to be diligent and hearty in the Service of God. As all the Creatures in their Order, ſerve and miniſter to Man alone; ſo ought all the Powers of our Souls and Bodies to be employed ſolely in the Service of God. And as the greateſt natural Pleaſure which Man has in this World, ariſes from the Uſe and Enjoyment of the Creatures; ſo nothing is more acceptable to God, than the ſincere Services of a devout Soul; nothing delights him more, than love ariſing from a lively Faith in *Chriſt*, operating in a free and generous Spirit. From what has been ſaid, it is plain, that the Creatures exhort and inſtruct Mankind to love God. (1.) With all their Strength. (2.) Freely and willingly. (3.) Heartily and ſincerely. (4.) Solely and entirely.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

A general Rule teaching us how to anſwer our Obligations to God.

Cant. iv. 16. *Let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant Fruits.*

§. 1. AS the Creatures are appointed by God to ſerve and obey Man; ſo Man is obliged to love God, and in this the Creatures are our Monitors and Inſtructors. Thus the Trees furniſh us with ripe, ſweet, perfect, and delicious Fruits; which if they were unripe, ſour, or rotten, no body would taſt them, or care for them. So it is not ſufficient for Man to offer his Service, his Love, Fear, or Honour, unto God, unleſs they be genuine and perfect in their Kind, being made acceptable unto God through Chriſt, and in Chriſt, through the Holy Ghoſt, who produceth in us all his true and perfect Fruits. This then is the great End for which we muſt Labour, by Faith and Prayer, that we may bring forth Fruits acceptable to God: Like the Trees which ſpend the whole 12 Months of the Year in Labouring to produce Fruits wholſome, pallatable, and pleaſant to the Eater; for God will no more accept our unripe, ſour, or bitter Works, than we our ſelves would reliſh ſour and unripe Fruit.

§. 2. Moreover, as the Trees ſerve us with the greateſt Simplicity and Sincerity, not knowing what they are doing, but by natural inſtinct providing for our Pleaſure and Benefit: So is it our Duty to ſerve God *out of a pure Heart, a good Conſcience, and Faith unfeigned*, without hypocriſie and ſiniſter Deſigns, that both we and our

our Works may be acceptable in his Sight. In a Word, that universal Rule which holds in the School of Nature, must necessarily be transferred to our Love and Duty to God, *viz. That a Man ought never to cease from labouring, till he hath brought forth Fruits acceptable to God: On the other hand, that all Superstition, Will-Worship, and Hypocrisie, are as hateful and abominable in the Sight of God, as unripe and rotten Fruits are to us.*

CHAP. XVII.

That the Christian that loves not God, cannot excuse himself upon the Account of his own Infirmities, or the Difficulty of the Duty.

Wisd. xiii. 9. *If they were able to know so much, that they could aim at the World: how did they not sooner find out the Lord thereof?*

1 Joh. v. 3. *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous.*

§. 1. AS God hath implanted in every Man a Faculty of Willing or Desiring, which we call the Will, which is also the Seat of Love, and which mutually depend on each other; and as he knows by a natural Instinct, that the chiefest Good is to be loved by him, and that God is that chiefest Good: Hence it follows, that only Man has a natural Knowledge that he ought to love God, and of the Reasons that oblige him to it. For as brute Creatures, and particularly Dogs, are fond of their Benefactors;

factors; ſo Man is under the higheſt Obligations to love God, from whom he hath received all that he hath; and if he does not, he is more ſtupid and ungrateful than the Beaſts that periſh.

§. 2. Moreover, as it is the Nature of Love to exclude or cure all Wearineſs and Sadneſs, (which are the Effects of Hatred and Diſpleaſure,) to ſweeten and ſoften all the Labours and Difficulties that may attend the Service of the Perſon beloved: So we are obliged to expreſs our Love to God, by all the Tokens of Satisfaction and Joy, ſince Love is the Happineſs and Comfort of our Souls. And in this appears the Kindneſs and Love of God towards Man, that He does not exact of us an hard, ſevere, and painful Service; but only the ſweet, the joyful, the comfortable Exerciſe of Love. Love caſteth out fear, anguiſh, and torment, otherwiſe it ceaſeth to be Love, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4. Love conquers all Difficulties, drives away all Sorrow, filling the Soul with Joy and Gladneſs, ſo that if we love not God, we are without excuſe. By which I do not mean, that Man, ſince the Fall, can by his own Strength and Power, perfectly love God as he ought; but to ſhew that every Man is convinced in his own Conſcience, that he ought to love Him as well as he can, and that he that does not, is worſe than the Beaſts, and that both Nature and Religion oblige us thereto.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

That every inſtance of our Duty to God, tends to promote our own Happineſs.

Pſal. xix. 12. *Moreover, by them is thy Servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great Reward.*

§. 1. HAving ſufficiently proved in the firſt and ſecond Chapters, that God is an abſolute, infinite, and ſuperabundant Good, having all Perfection in and of himſelf, receiving no benefit from the Service and Worſhip of the Creature; it follows, that all our religious Services, as they cannot be enjoined to no purpoſe, ſo muſt tend directly to our Benefit and Advantage. So that all the Time and Pains we ſpend in the Service of God, are really and truly laid out in the Service of our ſelves.

§. 2. For ſo great is the Kindneſs and Love of God towards Man, that He hath pointed out to him the *Path of Love*, that he might walk in it, and drink plentifully of the Waters of Life. O the boundleſs Love of God! who has made even our Duty to be our Happineſs. But here we muſt not think, that we can merit any thing by the Services we pay to him, whereas in Truth, all the Bleſſings we receive either in this Life or the next, are ſolely owing to the free Grace and Favour of God. The Senſe and Meaning of this Chapter then is this: That the Vices and Virtues of Men are neither profitable nor hurtful unto God, but unto themſelves.

CHAP. XIX.

The Service which the Creatures pay to Man, compared with that which Man pays to God.

Prov. iii. 21. *My Son, let them not depart from thine Eyes, keep ſound Wiſdom and Diſcretion: So ſhall they be Life unto thy Soul, then ſhalt thou walk in thy Way ſafely.*

AS we have already ſhewn that there are two ſorts of Services, one which *the Creatures pay to Man*, and the other which Men pay to God, and both tending to the ſole Happineſs of Man; it remains now that we ſhow the Reſemblance and Relation that is betwixt them both. As for the Service of the Creatures, it is not in the Power of Man to make any Retribution for the Good they do us; (for every thing that we have is God's:) nor indeed is it fit it ſhould, becauſe all the Goodneſs of the Creatures, is no more than a little Stream of divine Goodneſs derived to us through them; and to Him alone, the Author and Fountain of all Good, all our Love and Gratitude is due. So then, though a Man cannot ſubſiſt one Moment without the Aſſiſtance of the Creatures, yet are they not the proper Objects of our Love, but God alone, who, by their Services, endeavours to oblige and draw us to a reciprocal Love and Service to himſelf. For what advantage is it to us, to live by the Help of the Creatures, unleſs we live unto God.

§. 2. This then is the Mind and Intention of God: To inſtruct us by the ready and cheerful Services

Services which the Creatures pay to us, how cheerfully we ought to love, to ſerve, and obey Him. For as Man cannot live without the Help of the Creatures, as the Air, and univerſal Spirit of Nature; ſo he *ſpiritually* dies unto God whenſoever he ceaſes to obey Him, and live in Chriſt. Moreover, as the Life of Man is nothing worth, if it be not pious and devout; ſo the Service of the Creatures profits him nothing, if he alſo be not active and cheerful in the Service of God. And as the *natural* Life is nothing, if compared with a Life of *Piety* and *Devotion*; ſo the Service we pay to God, profits us much more than all the Service the Creatures pay to us. Nay, he that ſerveth not God is not worthy of the Service of the Creatures: For as they were made for the Service of Man, ſo Man was made for the Service of God: And all the Duty they pay to us, is only to encourage us in our Duty to our Maker. And when this end is not anſwered, we may not only be ſaid to uſe the Creatures in vain, but abuſe them. The End of all that has been ſaid, is this; that as God has commanded the Creatures to contribute to the Support of our natural Life, He does thereby inſtruct us to devote and dedicate that Life entirely to his Honour and Service.

CHAP. XX.

By the Service of the Creatures it is plain, that all Things are preſerved and ſupported by the Hand of God.

Wiſd. xi. 25. *How could any thing have endured, if it had not been thy Will? or been preſerved, if not called by thee?*

AS Man, the nobleſt of the Creatures, cannot ſubſiſt one Moment without the Help of thoſe that are much meaner and more ignoble than himſelf; it follows, that that Being, and thoſe Perfections by which they help and aſſiſt us, are entirely owing to God. And whoſoever denies this, muſt believe, that they who want not our help muſt be more worthy than us, who cannot ſubſiſt without theirs. Whereas the more natural Concluſion would be, that if Man cannot ſubſiſt without their help, they who are ſo much more ignoble than he, muſt likewiſe depend on ſome Superior Being for their Support and Preſervation. But as He that ſupports the Creatures, does alſo ſupport Mankind by their means, it is plain, that He can be nothing leſs than the Creator and Maker of all Things. For nothing can preſerve our Being, but He that gave it, and that is God, who ordained the Creatures for our ſakes, and Man for his own.

CHAP. XXI.

That by the twofold Service of Man and the Creatures, there is a wonderful Union betwixt the viſible World, Man, and God.

Jer. x. 6. *There is none like unto Thee, O Lord. Thou art Great, and thy Name is great in Might. Who would not fear Thee, O King of Nations?*
Mal. i. 6. *If I be a Father, where is my Honour? And if I be a Maſter, where is my Fear?*

§. 1. LET us now conſider and admire the wonderful *Order* and Union of all the Creatures with God, by that double Service of which we have ſpoken. For as all the Creatures were made for the Uſe of Man, from thence ariſes a very great Relation and Union betwixt Man and them, as there is by our Duty and Service to God, betwixt us and Him. For as God intended to draw Man to himſelf by the Cords of Love, ſo He commanded all the Creatures to do Service unto Man, as being created for his Uſe alone, looking upon this as a ſtrong Obligation upon us to love, ſerve, and honour Him.

§. 2. And hence we may learn, that all the Duty they pay to us, or we to God, tends ſolely to the Good and Benefit of Man. As for the other Creatures, they reap no Benefit or Advantage from their ſeveral Labours and Services, but only that every one is looked upon to be more or leſs Excellent, in Proportion to the Service they do to Man. So likewiſe God receives no Advantage from our Services to Him, but

the greater Love any Man has for God, ſo much the more Noble he is, and the greater Benefit he receives. From whence it appears, how wonderfully this twofold Service unites the Creatures to Man, and Man to God. And would to God that bond of Union which is betwixt God and Man, were as ſtrong as that which is betwixt Man and the Creatures. For as they are inceſſantly employed in the Service of Man, and never act contrary to this deſign of their Creation; Man, on the contrary, burſts the Yoke, and breaks the Bonds of Duty which God has laid upon him, debaſing himſelf below the Beaſts, though he be ſo much nobler than they.

§. 3. Now if the Laws of Nature and Reaſon require the Creatures to be obedient to Man, as their Lord, how much more juſt and reaſonable is it, that Man ſhould be obedient unto God? For as the Soul is much more Noble than the Body, ſo is the inward and *ſpiritual* Service of God much more Excellent than that external and bodily Service of the Creatures. And thus by the Duty and Service of Man to his Maker, are all the Creatures united unto God, and perfected in Charity, that they may not be created in vain.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

From our firſt Love which we owe to God, ariſes a ſecond which we owe to our Neighbour.

1 Joh. iv. 21. *This Commandment have we from God, that he that loveth God, love his Brother alſo.*

§. 1. AS we have already ſhewn, that our Love is entirely due to God, and that this is the firſt and chief Obligation upon us; hence it follows, that it would be highly unjuſt to alienate that Love from Him, and fix it upon any other. For as God has appropriated and confined his Love to us, ſo ought we entirely to conſecrate ours to Him. For though the Creatures indeed do us good, yet we may more properly ſay, that God does us good by their means, foraſmuch as He ſupports, enables, and commands them to miniſter to our Neceſſities. Whence it follows, that Man alſo being a Creature of God, appointed to miniſter to his Neighbour, if he does him any Service, he ought not to claim any honour or love to himſelf, which are due to God alone. But as Man is obliged to love God above all things, ſo he is thereby bound to unite his Will and Love with the Will and Love of God, and to love all Mankind as created in the Image of God, as freely and ſincerely as God himſelf loves them. And he that ſaith he loves God, and loves not his Brother, created in the Image of God, is a Lyar, and the Truth is not in him; for every one that truly loveth God, will love his Brother alſo.

CHAP. XXIII.

By the Order of the Creatures, it is plain, that Man is made in the Image of God.

Gen. 1. 26. *God ſaid, Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeneſs.*

ALL the Creatures, in their different Orders and Degrees of Subordination, may be ſaid to imitate their Maker. Thoſe Beings that are endued with Life and Senſe, come nearer to him than the Vegetable; the Rational, than the Irrational. As then all the Creatures, in their Order, ſeem gradually to approach nearer and nearer unto God, and Man is the End and Perfection of them all, it follows, that he muſt be in the higheſt Degree of Conformity and Likeneſs unto God. For as the Wax repreſents the perfect Impreſſion of the Seal; ſo God has fixed a Stamp or Impreſſion of himſelf upon all Creatures; but to Man, before his Fall, He gave his own Image, and the Brightneſs of that Glory, which the reſt of the Creatures partake of in lower Degrees. Thus it appears from the Orders of created Beings, that Man was perfectly and entirely created after the Image of God. And that as God is a pure Spirit, a holy, juſt, and underſtanding Mind; ſo there is in Man a ſpiritual and underſtanding Soul, in which the Brightneſs and Glory of the divine Image ſhone and manifeſted it ſelf.

CHAP. XXIV.

That every Man is obliged to love his Neighbour as himſelf; and that this Love is highly beneficial to every one that has it.

1 Joh. iv. 8. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.*

§. 1. AS we were all originally created in the Image of God, and He is endeavouring to reſtore in us this loſt Image, by the Holy Spirit, and, if poſſible, to ſave us in Jeſus Chriſt; it follows, that we ought to love our Neighbours, and look upon them not as Aliens and Strangers, but as Kindred and Brethren, having all received from the ſame God and Father, our Life and Breath, and all Things; ſo that we ought to regard them with the ſame Affection that we do our ſelves, that the Image of God, renewed in us by Chriſt, may not ſuffer by our Fault.

§. 2. Seeing then that there is but one Image of God in us all, one Redeemer, and one Holy Spirit, how ſtrong ought the Bond of Love and Unity to be, betwixt thoſe who repreſent but one great Body, and every one are Members one of another? For as our Maker juſtly claims the *firſt* Place in our Love; ſo the *ſecond* is certainly due to them that are created in his Image. And becauſe this Image reſides more particularly in the Soul, we are thereby obliged to wiſh as well to the Souls of our Neighbours, as to our own; ſo then every Man is bound

bound to love his Neighbour, as to love his God, and that is a neceſſary Conſequence of this. For ſeeing God hath loved Man from all Eternity, and ſtill continues to love us, by providing plentifully for all the Wants of Soul and Body; He deſigns thereby, as with the Cords of Love, to draw us to himſelf, and to teach us, that as He loveth us, ſo ought we alſo to love one another.

§. 3. Moreover, as Religion, or the Worſhip of God, regards chiefly the Good and Benefit of the Worſhipper; it follows, that the Love of our Neighbour, which ariſes from our Love of God, does neceſſarily tend to the ſame End. Or ſhall we ſay that the Image of God in Man is profitable to the Giver, and not to the Receiver. Laſtly, As the Love of God and of our Neighbour is the firſt and chiefeſt Duty of Man, it muſt of neceſſity be alſo his chief and greateſt Good; yea, the Root and Fountain of all the Bleſſings he can poſſibly enjoy; ſo that nothing can ſtrictly be called good to him, that proceeds from any other Principle. So that the more we encreaſe and improve in the Love of God, and of our Neighbour, the more do we improve in Bleſſedneſs and Happineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

As all the Creatures are inceſſantly employed in the Service of Man, they do thereby inſtruct us, that all Mankind are to be conſidered as one Man, or as many Members of one great Body.

Mal. ii. 10. *Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherouſly every Man againſt his Brother?*

§. 1. AS all the Creatures, the Fire, Air, Earth, Water, Sun, Moon, and Stars, do equally, and without any reſpect of Perſons, ſerve and miniſter to Mankind, doing the ſame Service to the Poor, as to the Rich; to the Peaſants, as to the Citizens; to him that labours for his Bread, as to him that ſitteth on the Throne; by this, I ſay, God teaches us to look upon our Neighbours as parts of our ſelves, and all of us together as making up but one Man. And as He has commanded all the Creatures to pay honour and obedience to Man, He deſigns thereby to inſtruct us, that we are the Image of God, and ought to live in a conſtant Imitation of Him.

§. 2. And if we do not this, and accept not the Service of the Creatures with Thankſgiving, we are unworthy of the leaſt Service from them. Now as the Creatures pay equal Service to all Men, ſolely upon account of the Image of God which they bear, how much more is it incumbent upon us to love and honour our Neighbour, as bearing that divine image? So that the Creatures themſelves inſtruct us by their Exam-

Example, in the Duties we owe to one another; for as they regard all Mankind but as one Man, ſo ought we to do likewiſe. Laſtly, foraſmuch as all of us enjoy the Love and Favour of the ſame God; are all equally created in the ſame Image; as the Love of God is univerſal to us all, and his Bleſſings equally beſtowed on all; as we all labour under the ſame Neceſſities, and ſtand in need of the ſame Mercies; and are obliged to pay him the ſame Duty and Service; as we are all Partakers of the ſame Nature, and bear the ſame Name, (for the Pooreſt and Meaneſt is as truly a *Man* as the greateſt,) as we all receive an equal Tribute of Service from the Creatures; laſtly, as it is appointed for us all once to die; upon all theſe Accounts, we are obliged to love our Neighbours as our Selves, and promote Peace, Unity, and Charity one amongſt another.

§. 3. From all that has been ſaid, it appears, that there is a *twofold Brotherhood* among Men: The firſt, as we are all the Creatures of God, and are obliged to Him for our Being, and for all the Comforts and Supports of it, as well as the other Creatures. The *Second*, by which we are diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the Creatures, and have a cloſer and more heavenly Relation one to another, being all created in the Image and Likeneſs of God. But there is yet a much more noble *brotherhood* diſcovered to us in the Goſpel, by which we are all *Brethren of and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and Members of his myſtical Body under him our Head, of whoſe Fulneſs we all receive our different Meaſures and Proportions of Grace. *Eph.* i. 23.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

That this Charity, to which all Men are obliged by the Law of Nature, is the Foundation of the greateſt and moſt invincible Strength.

Eph. iv. 3. *Endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace.*

§. 1. AS it is moſt certain, that the greateſt Strength ariſes from concord, and the greateſt Weakneſs from diſcord; it will follow, that the cloſer this Concord is, the greater will the Strength be. And in order to be united among our Selves, it is neceſſary that we begin firſt with being united unto God. The cloſer our Union is with God, the ſtronger will it be with our Neighbours. For it is impoſſible that he who is ſincerely and heartily united unto God by Love, ſhould hate his Neighbour, whom God ſo ſincerely loveth. Yea, the more ardently any Man loves God, the more tenderly will he love his Neighbour; and the more he loves him, the cloſer will he be united to him.

§. 2. So then upon the diminution or encreaſe of our Charity, depends the Decay or Increaſe of our Union; and when both are perfect, the Strength ariſing from them is invincible. Whence it plainly appears, that when Men love God, they muſt of Neceſſity love one another, and are thereby united in a perfect Bond of Unity and Peace. But when once they come to forget God, and to care for no body but themſelves, thence proceed Faction and Diſcord, which end in Ruine and Confuſion. Here then

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we ſee the Advantages of *Concord*, and the many publick and private Bleſſings that flow from thence; and all the Miſeries that attend confuſion and diſcord, how they rob us of thoſe Bleſſings, which every ſingle Perſon may enjoy in the Safety and Peace of the Publick. In a word, ſo great are the Benefits of this univerſal Love of God and Man, that ſo long as it is preſerved, no power of Earth or Hell can deſtroy or hurt us. Hitherto we have been aſcending by gradual Steps, from the loweſt Creatures, to God, our chiefeſt Good, being taught and convinced by the Creatures, of the Obligations we are under to love and worſhip God: From whence we deſcend again from the Creator to the Creature; *i. e.* from the Love of our Creator, to the Love of the Creatures.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of the Nature, Properties, and Fruits of LOVE.

Luk. xi. 35. *Take heed that the Light that is in thee be not Darkneſs.*

THAT nothing is properly our own but *our Love*, is too plain to need any Proof. From whence it naturally follows, that if our Love be good, and rightly applied, our Hearts, and the Treaſures that are in them, are good likewiſe; but if otherwiſe, our Selves, and all that we have, are evil. For it is our Love only that makes us either good or bad. And as when our Love is right and duly placed, there can be nothing better; ſo when it is otherwiſe, there can

can be nothing worse. Lastly, Seeing we can call nothing our own but our Love, it follows, that on whatsoever Being we place our Love, to that we sacrifice our selves and all that we have. And whensoever we abuse or misapply our Love, we throw away and lose all that we have. So then, if all our Goodness consist in the rectitude of our Love, and all our Evil in the misapplying it; it follows, that *Virtue* it self is nothing else but our Love, truly and properly placed; and *Vice* nothing else but a perverse and irregular Love. And whosoever considers these Properties of Love, cannot be ignorant wherein the chief Good, and greatest Evil of Man, doth consist.

CHAP. XXVIII.

That the first Property of Love, is to unite the Lover with the Thing or Person beloved, and to transmute him into its own Nature.

1 Joh. iv. 16. *God is Love, and he that abideth in Love, abideth in God, and God in him.*

§. 1. THE Reason why Love unites it self to the beloved Object, is, because it is the Nature of Love *to communicate it self* willingly and freely to every Person or Being that is disposed to receive it. For Love is a free Gift, and cannot be compelled or obtained by force. And as it is the Nature of a Gift, to be entirely in the Power of him to whom the last owner gave it; so our Love is entirely appropriated to him on whom we have bestowed it,

so that we truly give up our selves to that thing on which we fix our Love. And thus the Beloved is united with the Lover, and they two become One, not by constraint or force, but freely, willingly, and joyfully: And so the Lover is changed into the Thing Beloved, and takes its denomination from its Object: Hence we read of the carnal Love, the earthly Love, and the divine Love, all taking their Names and Characters from the Objects on which they are fixed.

§. 2. Thus then every Man has it in his Power to be changed with freedom and ease into a Being more Noble than himself. Moreover, as the Will does without Controversie undergo a Transmutation in Love, and every Transmutation is from an ignoble to a more noble State of Being, (as we see the Elements are changed into Plants and Herbs, and these into the Flesh of living Creatures, and they again into the Substance of Humane Bodies,) it would therefore be unnatural to fix our Love, and consequently to be united and changed into any thing that is meaner than our selves, but rather upon *GOD, the Best and Supreme BEING*; to whom, according to the Order of Nature, our Love and Will ought to be united. So that we hear as it were, the whole Creation calling to us, and putting us in Mind of the supreme Excellency of God, upon which account He, and He alone, is worthy of our Love.

CHAP. XXIX.

That nothing is worthy of our Love, but that which can requite it, by making us more noble and more happy.

1 Joh. ii. 15. *Love not the World, neither the Things that are in the World.*

§. 1. AS our Love is the moſt noble Preſent we can make, and has a Power of changing our Wills into the Nature of the thing beloved, ſo that we are under perfect ſubjection to that which we heartily love; it follows, that we act meanly and unworthily, when we give to any thing that is vile and earthly, the Power of enſlaving our Will, which is a ſpiritual Faculty, and conſequently more noble than any corporeal Being; and that he is very unhappy and fooliſh, who places his Love on his Body, and the Gratifications of Senſe; on his fine Furniture, ſplendid Equipage, noble Houſes, and large Eſtates; all which ſink and debaſe the Soul, and can yield it no ſatisfaction in Trouble, no comfort in the Hour of Death, or in the Day of Judgment. Nothing can do this but God, who is the higheſt and chiefeſt Good, and alone is worthy of our Love. We muſt not therefore proſtitute our Love to any thing that is not ſenſible of the Honour we pay it, nor able to make us a worthy Return for it, much leſs to Things that corrupt and debaſe it, making it earthly, ſenſual, and perplexing. On the other hand, as God loves us above all Creatures,

He deserves a suitable Love from us; and that not only as He raises and ennobles our Love, but as He requites us with his own, which is most Excellent, Uncreated, and Eternal.

CHAP. XXX.

That our first and chiefest Love is due to God, as the First and Last, the Beginning and the End of all Things.

Deut. xxxii. 4. *A God of Truth, and without Iniquity, just and true is he.*

§. 1. NOT only the universal Voice of Nature, but our own Consciences also bear us witness, that our chief and highest Love is due to God. (1.) As He is our chief and eternal Good. (2.) That not only Man, but all the Creatures derive their Being from Him. (3.) Because the Love and Goodness of God is conveyed unto Man by all the Creatures. From whence it follows, that God, who is the Fountain of Goodness and Love, deserves to be loved by us, more than any Creature, yea, than all the Creatures put together, they being no more than Means or Instruments of conveying to us, the transcendent and eternal Love of God. So that our Love is never true, right, regular, or reasonable, but when it is fixed upon God; which may be properly called, *the Rectitude of our Will.*

§. 2. On the other hand, when Self-love predominates, and a *Man* makes all his Love centre upon himself, that Love is unnatural, preposterous, unjust, and irregular, a direct Opposition

position to God, and the Root and Seed of all Sin and Iniquity. For what can be more Unjuſt and Ungrateful, than to withdraw our Love from God, who alone has a Right to it, and fix it upon any Creature; this, in ſhort, is the higheſt Injuſtice, and the higheſt Violation of the Laws of Nature, as well as of God.

CHAP. XXXI.

That the Man that principally loves himſelf, does actually ſet up himſelf in God's ſtead.

Dan. ix. 7. *O Lord, Righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee, but unto us confuſion of Face.*

Pſal. cxv. 1. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the Praiſe.*

§. 1. AS God is the Beginning and End of all Things, ſo the firſt and chiefeſt Love of Man is due to Him. And whoſoever tranſfers it to any other Object, does really and truly make that his God, which is the greateſt Affront that can be offered to the divine Majeſty. For as it is the Nature of Love, to unite the Lover with the Thing beloved; ſo the fixing our Love upon any Creature, does ſeparate and alienate us from the Creator.

§. 2. For whoſoever principally loves himſelf, he certainly loves every thing elſe ſolely for his own ſake, which he ought to love purely for the Sake of God, and ſo all his Love is founded in and upon himſelf, which ought to be fixed entirely upon God. Hence he is employed in doing his own

Will inſtead of God's, he uſurps God's Right, invades his Royalty, and ſets up a Kingdom in Oppoſition to God's Kingdom, and like the Giants of old, rebels againſt his Maker and his God.

CHAP. XXXII.

As the Love of God, when it predominates, is the Root and Fountain of all Good; ſo Self-love is the Source and Spring of all Evil in us.

Hoſea xiii. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf; but in me is thy Help.*

§. 1. LOVE is the efficient Cauſe of all Things; and as there are two Sorts of Love, *the Love of God, and the Love of our Selves*, and theſe directly oppoſite to each other, it follows, that the one muſt be extremely Good, and the other extremely Evil. But foraſmuch as it is plain, that the Preference is to be given to divine Love; it follows, that that alone is *good*. For the Love of God is a *divine Seed* in us, from which no Evil, but all good Things proceed. This Love unites it ſelf to its Object, which is God, its chief, its only Good, in whom it reſts, triumphs, and rejoices, as God does in it. For Joy and Pleaſure ariſe from Love, as we find, *Pſal.* xviii. 1, 2. This ſpreads it ſelf over all the World, and, like God its Author and Object, communicates and beſtows it ſelf upon every worthy Receiver.

§. 2. Moreover, as it has all Things in God, and is happy in the Enjoyment of him, it ſtands in

in need of no Creature. On the other hand, as from divine Love proceeds nothing but good, ſo from *Self-love* proceeds nothing but evil; this is the Root of all the Iniquity, Sin, Blindneſs, Ignorance, and Miſery, that humane Nature is capable of. By this a Man makes his *own Will* his God; and as the true God is the Fountain of all Good, ſo this falſe God, this vain Idol, our *Self-will*, is the Fountain of all Evil. Moreover, as the Creatures which we are ſo fond of, are made out of Nothing, and are ſo weak and uncertain, that they are always tending to their original State, and, in the mean Time, are nothing but Poverty, Miſery, and Sorrow; it follows, that as Man is changed into the Nature of the Thing he loves, he muſt likewiſe partake of their Inconſtancy, their Poverty and Miſery, and can have no reſt in the Enjoyment of them. If the Creature is Vanity and Sorrow, the Heart that cleaves to the Creature, enters into its Vanity, and muſt be partaker of its Sorrow.

§. 3. Thus *Self-love*, when it rules and is uppermoſt in Men, makes them Enemies to God, fills them full of all Iniquity, and brings them into ſubjection to the Creatures. As the Love of God dilates and enlarges the Soul, ſo the Love of our Selves, contracts and ſtraitens it, making it unjuſt, corrupt, proud, and covetous. As the Love of God makes us quiet, eaſie, peaceable, and benevolent; ſo the Love of our Selves makes us unquiet, turbulent, and ill-natured. As the Love of God inſtates us in the Liberty of the Sons of God; ſo Self-love makes us Slaves to the Creatures. The one gives us a ſtrmneſs and Conſtancy of Mind and Will; the other makes us unconſtant and changeable. The one makes a Man courteous, couragious,

generous, and obliging; the other makes him ſoure, timorous, mean, and an Enemy to every body but himſelf.

CHAP. XXXIII.

That the Love of God, and the Love of our Selves, are the two Doors or Paſſages by which all the Knowledge of Good or Evil enters into the Soul of Man.

Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal Mind is enmity againſt God.*

§. 1. AS it is plain, that by theſe two Kinds *of Love*, all the Motions and Operations of our Will are governed and directed, and that all other Deſires and Inclinations have their birth and byaſs from them; it follows, that upon them depends all our Knowledge, either of Good or Evil. For as *the Love of God is the Principle by which we know and judge of all the Good that is in Man*; ſo Self-love diſcovers to us all the Evil. And whoſoever underſtandeth not what Self-love is, knows not what Evils there are in Man; juſt as he that underſtandeth not the Love of God, cannot know the Good that is in him. For no Man can judge of either Good or Evil, who knoweth not the Springs and Fountains from which they flow.

§. 2.

§. 2. Moreover, as *the Love of God is a ſhining Light*, diſcovering to us not only it ſelf, but its Enemy, which is Self-love; ſo, on the contrary, *Self-love is a thick Darkneſs*, blinding the Eyes of Men, that they cannot ſee the Good or Evil that is in them. So then theſe are the two *Roots* of Good and Evil, which whoſoever is ignorant of, cannot rightly judge of either. For as Man conſiſts of two Parts, *Soul* and *Body*; ſo in reſpect of one, he ſets his Heart upon Honours, Dignities, and Preferments; whilſt the other tempts and draws him to fleſhly and ſenſual Pleaſures. So that whoſoever thus loves himſelf, muſt be a Slave either to Honour or Pleaſure, which he looks upon as his greateſt Happineſs, as gratifying that inclination to himſelf, which is uppermoſt in his Heart.

§. 3. Moreover, from theſe two kinds of Self-love ſpring many others, as various as are the Means and Inſtruments of obtaining the Honours, or fulfilling the Luſts which have taken Poſſeſſion of our Hearts. And theſe are chiefly *Three*: (1.) *Pride*, or an inclination to be eminent and popular in the World. (2.) *Pleaſure* and Luxury, by which we indulge and gratifie the Fleſh. (3.) *Covetouſneſs*, or an inordinate Love of worldly Things. Whoſoever is greedy of Honour, cannot chuſe but hate every Thing and Perſon that ſtands in his Way, and hinders his Deſigns; whence proceed *Anger* and *Revenge*, and *Envy* of all thoſe who are poſſeſſed of any Advantages which we want, or which ſeem to eclipſe or leſſen the Figure which we deſire to make in the World; hence alſo proceed *Lazineſs* and *Sloth*, and a mean Fear of Labour or Sufferings, which are ungrateful to Fleſh and Blood. In a Word, all Sins and Iniquities proceed from this fruitful Fountain of Self-love.

CHAP. XXXIV.

That nothing but the Love of God can eſtabliſh Peace and Unity among Men; and that Self-love is the only Cauſe of Contention and Diſcord.

Col. iii. 14. *Above all theſe things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectneſs.*

§. 1. IF all Men had an equal Love for God, the ſupreme Good, they would then all be of one Heart, and of one Mind, and the Sincerity and Unanimity which they would manifeſt in the Love of God, would cordially unite them to each other; but inſtead of this, every Man loves himſelf, and purſues the Inclinations of his own Heart, ſo that hardly two can agree together. For as he whoſe Heart is ſet upon *Honour*, cannot chuſe but hate and envy every one that is preferred before him; ſo from theſe different Intereſts and Inclinations, nothing can proceed but Emulation, Strife, and Diſcord.

§. 2. Moreover, as he that purſues his own Will, and courts the Honour and Eſteem of Men, makes himſelf his own God, there muſt be by conſequence as many of theſe Idols and falſe Gods, as there are proud, ambitious Men in the World. Hence ariſe Envy, Hatred, Strife, Wars, and Fightings, whilſt every one is bent upon encreaſing and defending his own Grandeur, in Oppoſition to that of his Neighbours. So that it plainly appears, that as the Love of God is the Bond of Peace and Union;

nion; ſo Self-love is the Root and Cauſe of all the Diſcord and Contention that is in the World.

CHAP. XXXV.

That every Man may know, by the Love he bears to himſelf, how he ought to love God.

1 Tim. i. 5. *The End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conſcience, and of Faith unfeigned.*

§. 1. THERE is no better way of convincing a Man, than by appealing to his own *Conſcience*. For there, as in a Glaſs, we may read our Duty much more plainly, than ten Thouſand Teachers can inſtruct us. So then, as we have already ſhewn that it is a Point of natural Equity to love God above all Things, and that he who does otherwiſe, ſets himſelf up as his own Idol; and now if any Man deſire to know what his Duty to God obliges him to, let him look into himſelf, and examine his own Heart, and conclude, that whatſoever he would have done for himſelf, that he is obliged to do for God; therefore as Self-love is natural to us all, we muſt turn the Tables, and offer that to God, which we unjuſtly arrogate to our Selves, by loving Him as we have hitherto loved our ſelves. Wherefore, (1.) as thou now loveſt thine own Will, and endeavoureſt to gratifie it in all Things, ſo thou muſt for the future prefer the Will of God to thine own Will, and think it better to ſubmit

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to God's good Pleaſure, than to humour and gratifie thy ſelf.

§. 2. (2.) Thou art in Love with *Honour and Eſteem*, and wouldſt have every body ſtrike to thy ſuperior Merit and Character; turn now this inclination of thine, and apply it to promote the Glory of God, and pray that all Men may conſpire to do the ſame. (3.) As thou haſt hitherto been angry with every one that has oppoſed thee in thy Purſuits of Glory, ſo oughteſt thou to be angry with thoſe that oppoſe the Glory of God. (4.) Whilſt thine Heart is full of Self-love, thou art greedy of Praiſe, and wouldeſt have every body think and ſpeak well of thee; do thou the ſame for God; labour and pray that God may be glorified by all Men, and that every Creature may praiſe and magnifie his Name. (5.) As thou art very induſtrious to be thought a Man of Truth and Honeſty, and wouldeſt be very uncaſie to be counted a Liar; ſo oughteſt thou alſo cheerfully and induſtriouſly to propagate and vindicate the Truth and Veracity of God. From all which it appears, that every Man may read in the Book of his own Conſcience, the Obligation he is under to love and honour God rather than himſelf.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

That divine Joy is the Fruit of divine Love.

Pſal. v. 12. *They that love thy Name ſhall be joyful in thee.*

§. 1. THE End and Perfection of every Thing, is the Fruit it bears, or the Effects it produces, which are as various as the Seeds from whence they ſpring. Therefore, as there are two different Seeds or Roots in Man, *The Love of God*, and *the Love of our Selves*, which are diametrically oppoſite to each other, ſo likewiſe are the Fruits which they produce. Now the End and Fruit of all humane Actions, is either *Joy* or *Sorrow*. *Joy*, as it is a good Fruit, muſt neceſſarily proceed from a good Root: And *Sorrow*, being evil, muſt proceed from an evil one; that is, in ſhort, all *true Joy* muſt proceed from the Love of God, and *all Sorrow and Anguiſh of Mind from the Love of our Selves*.

§. 2. For as all Joy ariſes from Love, and depends upon it, ſuch as is the Love, ſuch alſo muſt be the Joy; if the Love be divine, the Joy will be divine; if earthly, the Joy alſo will be earthly. Now ſo long as our Hearts are united to God by true Love, they cannot chuſe but rejoice and be happy in him. This is a foretaſt of eternal Life, in which both our Love and our Joy ſhall be compleated and perfected together. Therefore as we ſhall there live eternally unto God, ſo our Love alſo ſhall be eternal; and as our Love ſhall be perfect-

ed,

ed, ſo it ſhall be united with a perfect, abſolute, infinite, and eternal Good, being it ſelf alſo perfect, unchangeable, conſtant, and eternal. And from a Love ſo pure, immaculate, and heavenly, ſhall flow a River of Joy, divine, pure, precious, full of Rapture, full of Grace, Glory, and Immortality.

§. 3. For eternal Life it ſelf is nothing but this *eternal Joy*, with ſome drops of which, faithful Souls, even in this Life, have been often refreſhed and comforted. This is the Meaning of that Paſſage in *Cant.* ii. 4. *He brought me into the Banquetting-Houſe, ſtay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples.* And *Pſal.* lxxxix. 16. *Bleſſed is the People, O Lord, that can rejoice in thee.* And whoſoever has taſted of this Joy, can have no reliſh for worldly Pleaſures; but as that proceeds from the true Love of God, ariſing from Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, it follows, that if we deſire to obtain ſo great a Good, and by taſting ſome Drops of this Sweetneſs, to enjoy this earneſt and foretaſt of everlaſting Life, it muſt be obtained by a lively Faith, operating by divine Love. Whence St. *Paul* tells us, *Eph.* iii. 19. *that the Love of God paſſeth all Knowledge.*

§. 4. And as this divine Love is not a thing without us, but within us, it follows, that this does not depend upon our external Goods or Poſſeſſions; ſuch as Riches, Honours, Learning, Meat, or Drink, or any other outward Bleſſing, but that all theſe things are contained in it. And as this Love ſhall attain its full Perfection in the other Life, ſo the Peace and Joy that flow from it, ſhall be perfect and everlaſting. This Treaſure a Man ſhall have in himſelf, and no one ſhall take it from him; he ſhall have a River of living Pleaſure riſing up in himſelf, independent of all external Bleſſings and

and Comforts. And as no Man knoweth this Treaſure, but he that hath it; ſo he that has it, is in perfect eaſe; he envies no body, covets nothing, thirſts after nothing but the Fulneſs and Perfection of divine Love.

§. 5. The firſt Fruits of this Treaſure may be poſſeſſed by faithful Souls even in this Life, without leſſening the Reverſion in the next Life; yea, it rather increaſes and ſpreads it ſelf to infinite degrees, ſo that though all Mankind ſhould unite together in this divine Love, they would be no hindrance to each other, but would rather increaſe and improve their united Stock of Love and Joy. For the more earneſtly any Man loves God, the greater is his Joy. And if it be ſo in this World, how great ſhall our Joy be in the next, when God ſhall pour out the Fulneſs of his Joy and Love upon his Elect, and *himſelf ſhall be all in all*? 1 Cor. xv. 28.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of the Fruits of Self-love, ſhewing that nothing proceeds from thence but falſe Joy, and real and eternal Sorrow.

Jam. iv. 9. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, let your Laughter be turned into Mourning, and your Joy into Heavineſs.*

§. 1. AS true and divine Joy proceeds from true and divine Love, ſo nothing can proceed from falſe Love, but falſe Joy. For as Self-love ims at nothing, delights in nothing but Honours, Riches, and ſenſual and worldly

worldly Pleaſures, all which are fading, periſhing, and ſubject to a thouſand Caſualties; therefore the Man whoſe Heart is ſet upon them, cannot chuſe but be always fearful, apprehenſive, and jealous of every Accident that may deprive him of his Happineſs, ſo that his Joys are never *ſolid, or laſting*, but *falſe and periſhing*, mixt with Fears and Cares, and ending in Diſappointment and Sorrow. For as the Seed is, ſuch is the Fruit.

§. 2. Now we have already ſhewn, that Self-love is corrupt, impure, unjuſt, abominable, and unnatural, the Seed and Root of all Evil, the Parent of Weakneſs, Blindneſs, Error, and Death. And the *Fruit or Joy* ariſing from it is of the ſame ſort, unjuſt, impure, oppoſite to God, to our Neighbour, and to all Righteouſneſs; it rejoices in Iniquity, and contempt of God; and if it be a Sin but to love any thing which God hateth, how damnable muſt it be to delight and rejoice in it? Such a Joy as this, which is oppoſite to the Nature of every Creature, and contrary to the Nature and expreſs Will of God, cannot but end in *everlaſting Sorrow, Death, and Darkneſs.*

§. 3. For as *Divine Joy* brings us nearer and nearer to God; ſo *Carnal Joy* carries us farther and farther from Him. *Divine Joy* makes us the Friends of God; but *worldly Joy* makes us Enemies. *That* confirms and ſtrengthens the Will in the Love of God, makes the Conſcience eaſie, cheerful, and happy; *this* diſquiets and torments the Soul, making it turbulent, reſtleſs, and uneaſie. *That* may be obtained without labour or charge; *this* requires both, and all too little to ſupport and ſecure it. *The* one produces, improves, and preſerves Love, Peace, and Friendſhip among Men; *the other* creates Diſcord, Contentions, and Quarrels,

rels, Wars, Violence, and Bloodſhed. From *the one* all good Things, from *the other* all Evils proceed. *The one* is a lively, ſalutary, and ſober Joy, full of Virtue, full of Pleaſure, and acceptable to God; *the other* is fleſhly, vitious, diſhoneſt, baſe, and hated of God. *The one* increaſes our devout longings after God and Goodneſs; *the other* inflames our corrupt Deſires. *That* enlightens the Underſtanding, filling it with divine Light and Wiſdom; *This* darkens and blinds it, and fills it with Ignorance and Error. *That* is true and ſubſtantial; *this* treacherous, deceitful, and falſe.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

That everlaſting Death and Sorrow are the End of Self-love, and carnal Joy.

Rom. viii. 6. *If ye live according to the Fleſh, ye ſhall die.*

§. 1. AS we have already ſhewn everlaſting Joy to be the genuine Fruit of divine Love; it follows, that without that Love, we cannot be partakers of the Joy, but muſt ſit down at the laſt in eternal Anguiſh and Diſtreſs. For when the condemned Soul comes to reflect and conſider, that by his own Fault, he has irrecoverably loſt all the Bleſſings of a happy Eternity, how great muſt his Sorrow, how bitter muſt his Grief be? Annihilation it ſelf would be to him a Bleſſing; but alas, he wiſhes it in vain, he muſt bear his Burden, and

and undergo his Puniſhment to all Eternity. This muſt raiſe in him an eternal hatred and abhorrence of himſelf, and all his adherent Impurities and Sin, which, whether he will or no, will ſtare him in the Face, revenging as it were upon him the paſt Sacrilege of his Self-love.

CHAP. XXXIX.

That all we have muſt be offered and conſecrated to God.

Pſal. cxv. 6. *O come, let us worſhip, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

§. 1. AS we are aſſured that God is our Creator, Preſerver, and loving Father, to whom can we more reaſonably pay our Honour, Duty, and Service, than to him? Whom ſhall we rather implore and pray to, whom ſhall we rather praiſe and glorifie, than Him that made us? Whom ſhall we rather truſt? In whom ſhall we rather hope? Whom ſhall we rather love? In whom ſhall we rather rejoice and be happy? Shall we not love Him, who hath created us in his own Image? Shall we not honour Him, who has exalted us above all Creatures? Shall we not devote our Selves entirely to Him, who has given himſelf entirely unto us? who created us for the End that we might live, abide, and rejoice with Him for ever. Shall we not love and honour Him, who has adopted us for his Children?

§. 2.

§. 2. Think therefore and conſider with thy Self, O Man! that as God hath given thee a *rational Soul*, ſo thou oughteſt to ſacrifice all the Powers and Faculties of it to his Honour and Service; He has given thee the Faculty *of Loving*, therefore love Him; He has given thee Underſtanding, endeavour to know Him; He has given thee the Faculty *of Fear*, therefore fear Him; the Power of *Honouring*, therefore honour Him; the Gift of *Prayer*, therefore pray to Him; of *Praiſe and Thankſgiving*, therefore praiſe his Name; He has given thee the Power *of Believing*, *Hoping*, and *Truſting*, therefore depend, and truſt, and hope in Him; of *Rejoicing*, therefore rejoice and be glad in Him. Laſtly, As all Things are in Him, and He has an infinite Power of doing all Things, conſider this with thy ſelf, that if thou reſt and rejoice in Him alone, thou ſhalt in Him poſſeſs all Things.

§. 3. And hence ariſes the true and genuine *Worſhip of God*. He that loves Him, honours Him; he that loves Him not, affronts Him. So likewiſe he that fears Him, honours Him; he that fears not, deſpiſes Him. And all the other Vices and Virtues are of the ſame Nature. By Obedience God is honoured, and diſhonoured by Diſobedience; the ſame may be ſaid of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Gratitude. From all which it appears, that there is nothing better, more honourable, or more profitable for Man, than to honour God; and nothing more baſe and abominable, than to diſhonour Him.

CHAP. XL.

That he can never praiſe and glorifie God, that ſeeks his own Glory.

Pſal. cxv. 1. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the Praiſe.*

§. 1. HE that in all things *ſeeketh not the Glory of God*, and endeavours to promote it, acteth not like a Creature of God, but directly oppoſes his Maker, and all his Deſigns, ſeeing he made all Things for his own Glory. And he is not much better, who meaſures all things no otherwiſe than as they contribute to the raiſing his own Glory and Honour. Such a one ſaucily uſurps the Honour due to God alone, and, like the Rebel *Lucifer*, ſets himſelf in God's Throne.

§. 2. And this he does not only in his own Soul, but endeavours to debauch others into the ſame Guilt, by poſſeſſing their Hearts, which ought to be Thrones and Temples of God, with the ſame Notions of Love and Honour to himſelf, as he hath entertained in his own Mind, endeavouring as much as in him lies, to diſpoſſeſs his Maker, and ſettle himſelf in his room. And what greater Sin can there be than this? But as the Conſequence of this irregular Loving and Honouring a Man's ſelf, is, that it makes him the Enemy of God, and caſts him out of his Preſence into the Pit of Deſtruction, it follows, that he who would be the Friend of God, *muſt hate* and deny himſelf.

§. 3.

§. 3. Return therefore, and repent, O Man! Believe in Christ, and live in him as a new Creature, and he will receive thee, and comfort thee. But to others who persist in their Rebellion, and continue in their Corruptions, he shall say at the last Day: *I know you not, depart from me*, Matt. vii. 23. xxv. 41. Moreover, as the *Love of Christ* is our chiefest Good, our highest Wisdom, and the Perfection of our Knowledge, and Self-love is perfectly opposite to it; Let us be perswaded to cast out the Love of our Selves, and of the World, that the Love of Christ may enter into our Hearts. This is that Love which perfects and accomplishes our Christianity, and with this do Thou, O God, refresh and satisfie our Souls for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Conclusion.

AS I have prefixed to these Books, the Title *Of True Christianity*, I did it upon this Account, that *true Faith* in our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and *the Righteousness arising from that Faith*, are the Fountains from which the whole Christian Life ought to flow. So that I have written this, not for unbelieving Heathens, but for Christian Believers. Not for those that are hereafter to be, but that are already justified; who retain not only the Form of sound Words, but the Practice of all Christian Virtues and Graces; who not only believe and know, but practise the Obedience of Faith. So that all that has been said of Repentance and Christian Charity, must be understood as proceed-

ing from Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus*. And leſt any one ſhould think we attribute too much to the Freedom of our own corrupt Will, and to our own Works, I declare ſuch Doctrines to be very far from my Thoughts. My Deſign is, to perſuade all Men, that as they are Chriſtians, and anointed with the Spirit of God, ſo Chriſt ought to live and rule in their Hearts; and that the Holy Spirit ſhould govern, direct, and guide us, otherwiſe our Chriſtianity is falſe and hypocritical. And as to what has been ſaid in the Second Part of the Fourth Book, concerning the Freedom and Power of our corrupt Will in the Love of God, I mean no more, than that *Charity* is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, and that we are convinced not only by Scripture, but by our own Reaſon, and the dictates of natural Conſcience, that we are obliged to love God for the innumerable Mercies He has beſtowed upon us by the Means of his Creatures. And as this Argument, drawn from Nature, cannot be confuted, ſo it is as proper to convince an Infidel as a Chriſtian. For granting that God has beſtowed ſo many Mercies on us, who can deny, that we are in Gratitude obliged to ſo generous a Benefactor? And as He calls and invites us to love Him, by all the Creatures, which are beſtowed in common upon all Mankind, who can deny but that the Love of God is diſcovered to us in the Book of Nature, and that the Heathens themſelves may be convinced by Arguments drawn from thence? *Great are the Works of the Lord*, (Pſal. cxi. 2.) *ſought out of all them that have Pleaſure therein.* And *Pſal.* xcii. 5. *Thou, Lord, haſt made me glad by thy Works, and I will rejoice in giving Praiſe for the Operations of thy Hands.* The Lord God give

us

us Understanding and Wisdom, that we may know Him, and praise Him for all his Works, both here and for evermore. *Amen.*

A PRAYER,

For the Love of God.

MOST Gracious God, and merciful Father, the everlasting Fountain of Love and Goodness, of Grace and Mercy, behold how I mourn before Thee, lamenting the Coldness and Deadness of my Love, dead as to Thee, but alive and strong to my corrupt Self, and the Vanities of this wicked World.

I have not loved Thee, O Blessed Father, O Merciful Redeemer, O Holy and only Comforter, so entirely or sincerely as I ought; though I know, that Thou alone art worthy of my Love. Pardon, O merciful Lord, the greatness of my Sin, and the Errors of my deluded Mind. Inflict not on me that heavy Punishment denounced by the Apostle; If any Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.

Extinguish in me all inordinate Love of the World, quench in me the Desire of vain-Glory, destroy in me the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, by which we are fatally carried away from the Love of Thee. And kindle in my Soul the pure and immaculate Flame of Divine

Love, that I may love Thee alone for thine own ſake, and reſt intirely in Thee, my trueſt and chiefeſt Good, who art the Perfection of Love, Beauty, Holineſs and Wiſdom; who art Love and Goodneſs it ſelf, and the Fountain of Goodneſs. Let me love Thee with a cordial Affection, and love Thee for thine own Sake, without any mercenary Proſpects of Reward.

Grant me Grace to ſubmit my Heart, my Will and Underſtanding to Thee, that I may keep thy Commandments with a filial Obedience, and denying my own Will, may joyfully fulfil thine, teſtifying thereby the Sincerity of my Love.

O ſweet Jeſu! Let thy pure and perfect Love inflame my frozen Heart with the Love of Thee! Let thy flaming Love, enlighten my benighted Soul! Let that noble and exalted Love of Thine, raiſe and purifie my grovelling earthly Heart! Let the Love of thy divine Virtue ſtrengthen and nouriſh all the Powers and Faculties of my Soul and Body.

Grant, that being filled with this Love, I may abhor every thing that is diſpleaſing to Thee, and do and ſuffer every thing in Obedience to thy Will, and confirm me in this Reſolution to the End of my Life! He that thus loveth Thee, is truly wiſe; and he that hath this Wiſdom, cannot chuſe but love it; ſeeing what wonders he performs by the ſweet Force and Impulſe of Love. Grant that this pure Love may draw and unite me to Thee, and transform my whole Spirit, Soul, and Body into Thee! Let me think and ſpeak of Thee alone. Let me Hunger and Thirſt after Thee alone, that at laſt my Heart may be ſo ſatisfied with thy celeſtial Sweetneſs, I may for ever abide in Thee, and Thou in me.

Grant,

Grant, that from a Senſe of this Divine Love, I may love all Men in Thee, and for thy Sake, as mine own Self! That I may readily forgive and pray for mine Enemies, doing them Good for Evil, and overcoming them by Love.

Grant all this, for the Immenſe Love of the Father, my merciful Creator; of the Son, my dear Redeemer; and of the Holy Ghoſt, my true and only Comforter. **Amen.**

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APPENDIX.

The Author's Sentiments concerning Books of *Controverſial Divinity*; and Recommendation of the *German Theology*.

To all that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt and his holy Word, Wiſdom, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt be multiplied.

Dearly Beloved in Chriſt;

IT is well known, that ſo many Books of controverſial Divinity have been publiſhed within theſe laſt 70 Years, by the contending Parties of Chriſtendom, that the Life of Man would be too ſhort to read them all over. But of how little Uſe they have been to the Promoting true and genuine Chriſtianity, (which conſiſts in Repentance, and Converſion to the Love of God,) experience teacheth us. Yea, we have too much reaſon to believe, that all the Controverſies and Diſputes about Religion, that have ſo long divided the Chriſtian Church, were at firſt ſtirred up by the Devil, the Parent and Author of Confuſion, that he might thereby diſtract and call off the Minds of Men from the Practice of Repentance and other neceſſary Duties, in which the Life of Chriſtianity conſiſts; and the End has anſwered. And if we look a little into the World, we may perceive it every Day growing worſe and worſe, the

the Itch of Diſputing ſpreads, and the Hearts and Heads of the greateſt Part of the Learned World, are full of nothing but Diſputation and Controverſie.

In the firſt Beginnings of Chriſtianity, Repentance and a holy Life were the main Points inſiſted on, and the Doctrines of *Jeſus Chriſt* were taught, in order to be practiſed and tranſcribed into the Lives of the Hearers. But now a-days, whilſt we are zealous and induſtrious to preſerve the true Church, and ſupport the Orthodox Form of ſound Words, we loſe the Spirit and Power of Religion, which conſiſts in *Repentance and Newneſs of Life*. But as purity of Doctrine cannot dwell in an impure and impenitent Soul, (for what Communion hath Light with Darkneſs?) hence ariſes a dangerous and groſs Error, that though we renounce all the Virtues and Graces of the Chriſtian Life, yet we do God good Service by writing and diſputing in Defence of true Doctrine and Orthodoxy. This is indeed talking in Defence of that, which a Man conſtantly oppoſes and contradicts in every Action of his Life. The one indeed ought to be done, and the other not to be left undone; otherwiſe we pull down with one Hand, what we build up with the other.

Let us firſt of all conſider, *What Communion hath Light with Darkneſs, or what Fellowſhip hath Chriſt with Belial?* 2 Cor. vi. 14. that is, how can he preſerve the Purity of Chriſtian Doctrine, whoſe Heart and Life are under the Dominion of the Devil? Or, how can the pure Truth of Chriſt dwell there, where Chriſt himſelf dwelleth not? If we were Chriſtians, not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth, there is no doubt but the eternal Light would break forth glorioufly upon us, and unite us in the

Purity

Purity of Faith and Doctrine. But it is impoſſible that that Soul ſhould be enlightned with the Spirit of Truth, who refuſes to imitate the Life of *Jeſus Chriſt*. He himſelf hath told us, and not without cauſe, *Joh.* viii. 12. *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in Darkneſs, but ſhall have the Light of Life.* By *following Him* in this Place, he means the Imitation of his holy Life; and *the Light of Life* promiſed to his Followers, is the Light of divine Knowledge and Truth; the ſeveral Pretenſions to which, have been ſo hotly defended of late Years; every Party declaring their Doctrines to be nothing leſs than the very Truth of God, crying out, according to our Bleſſed Lord's Prediction, *Lo here is Chriſt, or lo there*, Matt. xxiv. 23. But where is He after all? No where certainly, but where the Purity of his Life, accompanies the Purity of his Doctrine. We allow the Preaching of the Word, and the Miniſtration of the Sacraments, to be Marks of a true Church; but alas! How many falſe Chriſtians are there that make uſe of both but as a Mask or Cover for Hypocriſie? Therefore we muſt add a third Criterion, and that is LOVE, which is nothing elſe, but the ſublime Life of *Jeſus Chriſt*. *In this*, ſaith he, *ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if you have Love one for the other*, Joh. xiii. 35.

To what end then are all our Labours and Studies to defend his Doctrine, whilſt we refuſe to imitate his Life; ſince He hath commanded the one, as well as the other? *Learn of me*, ſaith he, *for I am Meek and lowly in Heart*, Matt. xi. 29. as if He had ſaid, Learn firſt theſe two Virtues, as the Principles of the Chriſtian Life, and lay them as a Foundation for all the reſt. And if we could once ſee the Life of Chriſt as zealouſly imitated, as his Doctrines

are

are defended, the World would mend apace. I cannot deny, but that there are many uſeful and noble Writings publiſhed in Defence of our holy Faith, and that the Authors of them have done eminent Service to the Church of God. But the Fault lies in placing the Sum and Eſſence of Chriſtianity in this Orthodox Belief; whereas the chief End of Believing ſhould be, to lead Men to Repentance; and conſequently Men ought to dread the taking upon them to teach others, however Orthodox their Faith and Preaching may be, till they themſelves are entred into the holy Life of *Jeſus Chriſt*, leſt whilſt they preach (even ſound Doctrine) to others, they themſelves ſhould be caſt-aways. There ſhould alſo be ſome Meaſure obſerved in the Writing Books. Such multitudes of Books, even upon religious Subjects, as ſwarm in the World, ſeem as it were to be oppoſite to the Genius and Deſign of the *New-Teſtament*, which conſiſts not in the external Letter, but in the Spirit. And this Spirit is nothing elſe but the Life of Chriſt engraven on the Hearts of true Believers. Why then ſhould we tire and fatigue our Selves with ſuch variety of Books, as if the holy Spirit of God, the Fountain of Grace and Illumination, were extinct and dead, and we had no other way of coming to the Truth, but by labouring and turning over the innumerable Compoſitions of other Men?

It is not for nothing, that St. *Paul* has expreſly forbidden *all Contentions and Strivings about the Law*, Tit. iii. 9. Upon which, had it been neceſſary, St. *Paul* or *Titus* could have written as many Volumes as any of our Moderns. No, the Apoſtle knew better things; and knowing how uſeleſs and unprofitable ſuch Diſputes generally prove, commands the Governours

vernours of the Church *to reject an Heretick after the first and second Admonition*; and that for this reason, in the following Verse, *knowing that such an one is subverted*; so subverted, as not to be reclaimed by Arguments. From whence it appears, that controversial Writings do very little Service to the Church, and have seldom been successful enough to reclaim those for whose use they were designed. But that an holy Life, true Repentance, and diligent Prayer, are, generally speaking, the best Means to prevent, or put a stop to the Increase of Heresie and Schism. The strong Holds of Satan are not to be battered with Syllogisms, or overthrown by Disputation, he laughs at the Man of Argument, and despises the Critick and Philosopher, but he trembles at the Piety of the devout Christian, and flees before him. So then if we do not begin the Business of Religion with true Repentance, and a thorough and hearty Imitation of the Life of the Blessed *Jesus*, we shall never be united in the Purity of Faith and Doctrine, though we should dispute to the Worlds End. Yea, the farther we are removed from true Repentance and the Life of Christ, so much the farther do we recede from the Purity of Doctrine, from the true Faith, and the eternal Light of the Holy Spirit of God; and hence alone proceed the Decays of Christianity, which amongst the greatest Part of Mankind seems extinct and dead. For if Mens Lives be profligate, and contradict their Preaching and Writing, though they write never so many Books in Defence of the true Faith, they will do but little Good. *For into a malicious Soul, Wisdom will not enter; but entring into holy Souls, she makes them Friends of God and Prophets*, Wisd. i. 4. vii. 27. Yea, I may venture farther to say, that Christ himself, the true

true and faithful Shepherd, will not ſuffer his true Sheep, that follow him in Truth and Sincerity, to be ſeduced or drawn aſide out of the right Way: So that to them the many Polemical Writings that are abroad in the World, are of very little uſe. A few ſhort Inſtructions are ſufficient for them, for they bear in their Hearts the Book of Life, even the Holy Spirit of God, which beareth witneſs inwardly of *Chriſt Jeſus*; and ſo long as they walk faithfully in his Way, and imitate his holy Life, protects and defends them from Error. Yea, their own *Hearts are Books, not written with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God*, 2 Cor. iii. 3. the faithful Study of which is of more Uſe and Advantage towards the Working out their Salvation, than all the written Books in the World. So then if we would but practiſe true Repentance, and imitate the Life of the bleſſed *Jeſus*, we ſhould certainly never want the Light of Life, and very few Books beſides the Holy Scriptures would be ſufficient for us.

Our great High Prieſt has promiſed us his Holy Spirit, *to lead us into all Truth*, Joh. xvi. 13. but we ſlight and reject this heavenly TEACHER, when we leave his pure Streams to drink of the muddy Waters of humane Learning and Wiſdom, and deſerve to ſuffer for our Pains. To us may be fitly applied that Complaint and Expoſtulation of God, *Jer.* ii. 13. *They have forſaken me, the Fountain of living Waters, and have hewed out for themſelves broken Ciſterns, that will hold no Water*: that is, theſe People ſeek not me in the Ground of their Heart, but look for me abroad; whatever comes into their Hearts, enters in from without, like Rain dropping in through the Roof of a Houſe, which does but rot and deſtroy it: So theſe Men being deſtitute of all that true and

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ſolid Knowledge, which would perpetually be ſpringing up in their own Hearts; reſt in external Study, and Reading of many Books, and a ſuperficial Performance of religious Duties, whilſt their Hearts, which ſhould be perpetually flowing with Streams of living Water, are parched, dry, and dead; and this is the Caſe of all falſe Prophets, and falſe Chriſtians. The Stream of Knowledge in ſuch a Man, not flowing from a living Fountain, abideth not long, but quickly dries up. It is not living Water flowing from an inward Spring of Spirit and Love, but a Lake or Pool of muddy Waters meeting there by chance.

When therefore we have forſaken the Spirit and Fountain of Truth, and cleave to Books; when we are ſo far alienated from the Life of Chriſt, that we have nothing but the bare Name *of Chriſtianity* left, how is it poſſible, that the true Light ſhould abide in us? And whilſt we do nothing but pore upon Books, our Caſe will be no better than theirs, whom the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, 2 *Tim.* iii. 7. *Who are always Learning, yet never come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* For the more Books there are written, the more there are to be read; ſo that the Readers muſt be always *Learning.*

Truth is but *one.* And whatſoever is in its own Nature, a *ſimple Unity*, cannot need a multitude of Books to explain it. So then if Truth be but *one*, the Way that leads to it can be but *one.* This one TRUTH is CHRIST himſelf, and He is the one only WAY that leadeth to it. And this only Way is the LIFE of Chriſt, and he that walketh therein, will certainly come to the Truth; *i. e.* to Chriſt himſelf, according to his own Words, *Joh.* xiv. 16. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* In which Words, He directly tells us, that He is

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the *Truth*, and *the Way* that leadeth to it. And if we would walk carefully in this Way, we need not read ſo many Books, nor follow ſo many Teachers. The LIFE OF CHRIST would ſupply the Want of them all. And Chriſt, the eternal Light, would enlighten us, and unite us in the Purity of his Faith.

Thus the Apoſtle addreſſes himſelf to the Sinner: *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light*, Eph. v. 14. The Meaning of which Place is this: As many as are not awakened from the Sleep of this World, and the Love and Deſires of it; from the Sleep of Sin, and the Luſts of the Fleſh; from Covetouſneſs, and the Pride of Life; theſe cannot receive the Light of God, but are deſtined to eternal Darkneſs. So that all their Labour is loſt, *who hold* (and endeavour to propagate) *the Truth* (of Doctrine) *in Unrighteouſneſs* (of Life and Converſation.) One Devil does not caſt out another. And a *wicked Life* is no leſs diabolical, than *falſe Doctrine*, and the one can never caſt out the other, yea rather, they mutually produce and ſupport each other. For a wicked Life is the proper Soil, in which the Enemy of Souls ſows the Tares of falſe Doctrine.

Conſider the Caſe of the *Corinthians*, who when they refuſed to walk in the humble Steps of the bleſſed *Jeſus*, but being puffed up with their ſpiritual Gifts, were all contending for Pre-eminece and Superiority, they were ſoon divided into various *Schiſms*, and were no longer *Spiritual*, but *Carnal*; hence they ranged themſelves under different Heads and Names, one was *of Paul*, *another of Apollos*, *and another of Cephas*, 1 Cor. i. 12. And all this was owing to the immoderate reſpect they ſhewed to the different Gifts of their reſpective Teachers. St.

Paul

Paul was famous for his profound Learning and Knowledge; *Apollos* for his great Eloquence; and St. *Peter* for his Miracles and mighty Works. Upon these several Gifts, the *Corinthians* fixed their Eyes, and every one valued himself upon the Eminence of his respective Pastor, despising all but those of his own Communion or Congregation. They that were fond of Knowledge, followed St. *Paul*; the Admirers of Eloquence, flocked after *Apollos*; and the Workers of Miracles joined themselves to St. *Peter*; but in the mean Time, where was *Christ*? The same Distemper of Mind is still visible among us. What does the Learned among us labour and study for, but to excel one another? But St. *Paul* teaches us a better Lesson: *Yet shew I unto you a more excellent Way. Though I should speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels; though I should understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; and though I had all Faith, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*, 1 Cor. xii. 31. xiii. 1, 2. So that every one that is ambitious of being counted a Man of sublime Learning, is going the direct Way to Heresie and Schism; but he that is high in the *Love of God* and his Neighbour, is effectually secured from both; to which may be referred these Words of the Apostle, *Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifieth*, 1 Cor. viii. 1.

Consider the Case of *Cornelius*, Acts x. who began his Enquiries after true and saving Knowledge, with serious Repentance, Fasting, Weeping, and Prayer. And he had not long entred into this Way, before St. *Peter* was commanded, by a Voice from Heaven, to go and preach *Jesus Christ* to him. And the same Account St. *Luke* has given us of some other Persons. St. *Paul* himself was thrown to the Ground, typifying to him that Humiliation he was to undergo

go, before he could be enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, and be united in Faith to the Apoſtles, whom he was then perſecuting. This is the Path which all the Prophets and Apoſtles have trodden. They forſook all, particularly the Apoſtles, denied themſelves, and conformed themſelves exactly to the Life of the bleſſed *Jeſus*, before they could be partakers of his Spirit, or enlightened by his Truth.

If ye abide in my Words, (ſaith our bleſſed Lord, *Joh.* viii. 31.) *then are ye my Diſciples, and ye ſhall know the Truth.* Where *the abiding in his Words*, is not to be underſtood of his *Doctrine*, but of his *Life*. For they cannot be ſaid to abide in his Words, whoſe Lives are contrary to his Commandments. From whence it is plain, that they who refuſe the Life of Chriſt, ſhall never arrive at the Knowledge of his Truth. Yea, the Devil himſelf, *who deceiveth all the World*, (Rev. xii. 9.) *blindeth the Eyes* of the Wicked, *that the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt ſhould not ſhine unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Whereas over thoſe that walk in the Steps of their Redeemer, he has no Power; yea, had *Adam*, or the Devil himſelf, but ſtood firm in this Path, they had never fallen from God. The common Cry is, that we muſt not regard what Men do, but what they ſay; but our Lord has taught us otherwiſe; *By their Fruits*, ſays he, *ye ſhall know them*, Matt. vii. 16, 20. for to profeſs one thing, and practiſe another, is the Mark of a falſe Chriſtian. But the true Chriſtian is he, who, by the Grace of God, endeavours to have his Life and Principles anſwer one another. Without this, Chriſtianity is nothing but a meer Form and Shew, without Truth or Life. And this is the true Senſe of our Saviour's Words, *Ye are my Diſciples if ye continue in my Words.* Hence He alſo tells us,

Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. *The Phariſees ſit in Moſes's Seat, all things therefore which they ſhall command you, that obſerve and do; but do not ye after their Works.* Meaning, that they taught one thing, and practiſed the quite contrary, ſo that they were uncapable of Receiving Chriſt, the true Light, and therefore were no leſs than eight times pronounced accurſed by God.

Conſider alſo, whether all the Hereticks and falſe Prophets that have been in the World, did walk in the Ways, or imitate the Life of the bleſſed *Jeſus*? No, the quite contrary; and therefore we are adviſed by our bleſſed Lord to examine their Works, *By their Fruits*, ſays he, *ye ſhall know them.* For it is utterly impoſſible, that he ſhould be partaker of the Light of Life, who chuſeth to walk in the Paths of Darkneſs. It is a Saying of *St. Bernard*'s, that *the Streams of Grace flow downwards, and not upwards.* How then can the Grace of divine Knowledge, and the Purity of ſaving Faith, deſcend on thoſe, who walk in the proud Ways of *Lucifer*, and not in the humble Paths of the lowly *Jeſus*? The Tower of *Babel*, Gen. ix. 4. is a very fit Reſemblance of the modern State of the Chriſtian Church. They were reſolved to build a Tower, whoſe Top ſhould reach up to Heaven; juſt ſo do many Profeſſors, yea, and Teachers too of the Chriſtian Faith; being deſtitute of the Spirit of Chriſt, they reſolve, by their own Studies and Learning, to build a Tower, by which they may mount up to Heaven. But as they ſet about this Work, depending on their own Strength and Wiſdom, ſo do theſe: And as their Language was confounded, ſo does God confound the Language of theſe ſpiritual Builders, that they underſtand not one another: And as after the Diviſion of Languages, they were divided and ſcattered up and down the Earth;

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Earth; ſo are theſe ſpiritual Builders divided and ſcattered into innumerable Sects and Parties. Laſtly, As thoſe Fools were obliged to deſiſt from their raſh Attempt; ſo theſe ſpiritual Builders and Miniſters of the Goſpel will be forced at laſt to give over their diſputing and wrangling, and look out for ſome other Way of Propagating the Truth, and ſaving their own Souls, as well as thoſe committed to their Charge. Now then our Buſineſs muſt be to imprint on Mens Minds an operative Faith, inſtead of barren Speculations; and teach them rather to live the Life of Chriſt, than to diſpute about his Doctrines, ſo ſhall we no more be Babel-Builders, but true Labourers in the Lord's Vineyard, and Fellow-workers with God.

And now, Reader, whoſoever thou art, that deſireſt to be inſtructed in the *Life of Chriſt*, and a living operative Faith, let me recommend to thy Reading the Book of the *German Theology*. And ſatisfie not thy Self with once Reading it, but read it over and over, and ſtudy the Senſe and Meaning of it, which though it be profound, yet is comfortable and refreſhing to the Soul; and the oftner it is read, the plainer it will be. But if thou ſhalt be perſuaded to tranſcribe the Doctrine in thy Life and Practice, and the Flower of thy Knowledge ripen into the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, thou wilt quickly be brought to confeſs, that it contains nothing but true and living Chriſtianity; And that no ſort of Life is worthy to be compared with the Life of Chriſt. I muſt own that I have begun a ſort of Paraphraſe or Annotations upon this Book, for my own private Uſe, which if I thought they would

be of any Benefit to the World, I would gladly publiſh. It has not been publiſhed in our own Language ſince the Year 1534, ſo that it is now very ſcarce, and very little known. There are indeed many pious and excellent Books of this ſort handed down to us by our Forefathers, but, like *Joſeph* in the Dungeon, they now lie in Rubbiſh and Obſcurity, wanting to be poliſhed and brought into Light. The Reading of theſe Books convinces us, that there have been in paſt Ages many great and excellent Defenders of Spiritual Religion, who, by imitating the Life of Chriſt, were made partakers of his Spirit. Whoſe Examples and Virtues have been falſly pretended to by the Monks, Hermits, and Carthuſians of our Days. And as *Joſeph* was delivered out of the Dungeon by a Dream; ſo the Providence of God does, by various Means, diſcover and bring to Light theſe ſpiritual and religious Books. Moreover, as *Joſeph*, when he came firſt out of Priſon, was cloathed in Raggs; ſo our good old *Author* appears in the World in an odd and old-faſhioned Garb; his Sayings and Expreſſions are obſolete, not ſavouring of the Nicety and Politeneſs of the preſent Age, but his Thoughts are deep and noble, ſuiting the Grandeur and Dignity of his Subject, which is to teach us, *how to die unto the World, and live unto God, and be United to Him*; which is the End and Perfection of all Divinity. This *Union* is the Sum and Subſtance of the Chriſtian Religion. In a Word, this UNION with GOD, is the new Creature, the new Birth, Faith, Chriſt dwelling in us by Faith, the Life of Chriſt in us, the Indwelling of Chriſt, the Illumination of the Holy Spirit, and the Kingdom of God within us; all which

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different Expreſſions ſignifie but one and the ſame thing. For (1.) where true Faith is, there is Chriſt, for they are inſeparably united. (2.) Whereſoever Chriſt is, there is the Life of Chriſt. (3.) And where the Life of Chriſt is, there is nothing but CHARITY. And (4.) where the Love of Chriſt is, there is the Holy Spirit. And Laſtly, (5.) where the Holy Spirit is, there is the Kingdom of God, which is *nothing but Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. xiv. 17. So that if a Man has one Link of this golden Chain, he has it all: And if one be wanting, the reſt are loſt of courſe. For if he be void of the Life of Chriſt, he is without Chriſt, void of Faith, and deſtitute of the new Birth. But if Chriſt live and operate in thee, then all the Good thou doſt is not thine, but his that dwelleth in thee, who, by dwelling in thy Soul, as his own new *Jeruſalem*, takes away from thee all Opinions of Merit or Boaſting, ſince it is not thou thy ſelf that doſt that good, but the Spirit of Chriſt that dwelleth in thee.

And this is the true Divinity taught by this good old-faſhioned Divine, who, for the roughneſs of his Language, and courſeneſs of his Stile, I expect will be ſlighted and rejected by our modern fine Gentlemen, and polite Scholars. To help this, I have a little mended his Dreſs, and poliſhed his Stile, that it may pleaſe, if poſſible, the modern Taſt, which is more delighted with Elegancies of Language, than with the moſt ſpiritual and ſublime Truths. This *Joſeph* does not teach thee to conſent to the lewd Solicitations of *Potiphar*'s Wife, (*Gen.* xxxix. 12.) *i. e.* this perverſe World; but commands thee over and over to renounce it. For as many as are addicted to the Things of this World, to Covetouſneſs, or the Love of Gain; to the Luſts of of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, or the Pride

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of Life, all theſe commit Lewdneſs with *Potiphar*'s Wife; who though ſhe lay hold of *Joſeph*'s Garments, yet cannot prevail upon, but he leaves his Garments in her Hand, and flies from her. The ſame thing is acted every Day by the worldly wiſe Men of this corrupt Age! theſe Men, tho' they reliſh nothing but the World, yet think highly of themſelves; and though they ſavour nothing but the Fleſh, yet expect to be united to the heavenly *Joſeph*, the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; and endeavour, by their own Strength and Cunning, to raviſh him to their Embraces. Here you have a Self-conceited, Covetous *Divine* boaſting of his Knowledge in the Letter of Scripture, and crying out, *Lo here is Chriſt*, Matt. xxiv. 23. There you have a *falſe Chriſtian*, immerſed in the Love of the World, yet crying out with abundance of Zeal and Confidence, That he alſo is a Chriſtian! but alas! how ſadly are they deceived? The heavenly *Joſeph* has left them nothing but his Garments, the external Letter, the Form, the Name, and a certain ſpeculative Knowledge of Chriſt, whilſt he himſelf is fled from them, being not to be laid hold on by any but thoſe who with their whole Hearts embrace his holy Life, and walk as he alſo walked.

I have now no more to add, but a Word or two concerning the *Author* of * this Excellent Book. Thou muſt know then, Chriſtian Reader, that in the old *German* Edition (*a*) of

* *Theologia Germanicas.*

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(a) *He that deſires a more perfect Account of the Author, Title, Antiquity, various Editions and Verſions of this Book, let him conſult the Preface to the French Edition publiſhed at* Amſterdam *in the Year* 1700 *with this Title*: La Theologie reelle, vulgairment ditte La Theologie Germanique. *This Book was alſo publiſhed at* London *in Engliſh in the Year* 1648. *by one* Giles Randal,

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of it, which came out at *Wirtemberg*, in the Year 1520. it was Prefaced with theſe Words: " The Almighty and Eternal God dictated the " Contents of this Book, by a very wiſe, pru- " dent, juſt, and religious Man, and a ſincere " Friend of God; he was of a very ancient and " noble Family of *Germany*, and a Prieſt and " Warden of a College of the Teutonick Or- " der in *Frankfort*; it teaches us the perfect " Knowledge of divine Truths; and gives us " the proper Marks and Characters whereby " to diſtinguiſh the Friends of God, from falſe " Chriſtians, and the deceitful Workings of thoſe " corrupt Spirits that have always been highly " dangerous and hurtful to the Church of God. And now, Chriſtian Reader, farewell, take my Meaning right, and take heed of Judging raſhly. I commend thee to the Bleſſing of God, and my Self to thy Prayers.

Randal, *with this Title*, Myſtical Divinity: A little golden Manual, briefly diſcovering the Myſteries, Sublimity, Perfection, and Simplicity of Chriſtianity in Belief and Practice. *But as this Edition is very ſcarce, and the Stile of it obſolete, it were to be wiſhed that ſome able Hand would undertake to reviſe it, and publiſh it to the World in a more modern Dreſs.*

FINIS.

SERMONS Preach'd at St. *James's* by the Reverend Mr. *Boehm*, and ſold by *J. Downing*.

THE *Life of a Chriſtian*: A Sermon on the Death of his Royal Highneſs Prince *George* of *Denmark*, preach,d *Novemb.* 21. 1708.

The Glorious Epiphany: preach'd *Jan.* 6. 1710.

The Doctrine of Original Sin: preach'd the *third* Sunday after *Epiphany*, 1711.

Spiritual Improvement of Temporal Afflictions: preached *Jan.* 1712.

The faithful Steward: preach'd the fourth Sunday after *Epiphany*, 1712. on the Death of Mr. *Henry Will. Ludolf*, heretofore Secretary to Prince *George* of *Denmark*.

The Character of Love: preach'd the *third* Sunday after *Eaſter*, 1713.

The Doctrine of Juſtification: preach'd the *ſixth* Sunday after *Eaſter*, 1714.

Reliquiæ Ludolfianæ: The Pious Remains of Mr. *Heu. Will. Ludolf*; Conſiſting of Meditations upon Retirement from the World; and upon divers other Occaſions.

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True Chriſtianity, in Four Books: Wherein is contain'd the whole Oeconomy of God towards Man; and the whole Duty of Man towards God. Part I. Written Originally in High Dutch by the moſt Reverend *John Arndt*, late Superintendent General of *Lunebourgh*; and now done into *Engliſh*.